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The Art of the Prado

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VELASQUEZ. — THE INFANTA IN RED

(*See page 205*)

The Art of the Prado

A Survey of the Contents of the Gallery, together with Detailed Criticisms of Its Masterpieces and Biographical Sketches of the Famous Painters Who Produced Them

By
C. S. Ricketts

Illustrated

Boston
L. C. Page & Company
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Prefatory Note

The erection of the Prado was begun early in the eighteenth century by Charles III, who employed his architect, Juan de Villaneuva, for the work; but, owing to various interruptions, chiefly political, the building was not actually completed until about 100 years later, the first rooms being opened to the public in 1819.

Of the Prado Museum by far the most important part is the art gallery which contains a collection estimated at about 2,000 paintings.

The nucleus of the collection was formed by Ferdinand II, who gathered together all the paintings from his various palaces except the Escorial. The collection was greatly enriched by the art-loving Charles V and his son Philip II, and, later, by Philip V, who added a large number of French pictures of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The last large acqui-

sition of the gallery was in 1840 when were added to it all of the pictures from the National Museum of Trinidad.

EDITOR.

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The Art of the Prado

CHAPTER I

THE CONTENTS OF THE GALLERY

The gallery of the Prado has often been called a collection of masterpieces. Supremely fortunate as it is in the accumulation of canvases executed mainly in the maturity of the art of painting, it is less fortunate in its comprehensive view of art as a whole; in fact it may be said that the extraordinary quality of what is contained in this gallery blinds one to the absence of some of the greatest names.

The Prado, therefore, is less a treasure-house of the art of the world than the Louvre, for instance, or such galleries as the National Gallery, or the Royal Gallery of Berlin. It is, however, a centre where certain phases of art can best be appraised; and it stands immeasurably above such collections as those of Venice, Milan, or

Antwerp, where some school or set of schools may best be studied, since its range is larger, or at any rate more copious in the possession of unique works.

One might describe it as a rich man's gallery, did not this expression seem to exclude the evidence of national effort, both in the production and in the encouragement of art. This term, a rich man's gallery, is more appropriately given to the gallery of St. Petersburg or of Vienna.

Nevertheless, the evidence of a magnificent art patronage is characteristic of the Prado; an art patronage less continuous, less constructive than that of France as shown in the Louvre, and less conscious than that presiding at the formation of the Florentine galleries. In comparison with the Prado the gallery of Munich becomes sparse, and the collection of Dresden the result of an epoch in collecting less rich or less fortunate. In fact, over and above the national effort of Spain in the arts as we find it illustrated by the Prado — which it is as easy to overrate as to underrate — we notice the fruits of Spain's direct patronage of Titian; the lucky contact with Rubens has left its trace. Spain, like the English court in the time of Charles I., was a great purchaser of Italian pictures.

The character of the Prado is therefore mixed;

it represents at once a national, if intermittent, effort in the collections of Spanish painting; it represents even more the noble and direct patronage of the arts at fortunate moments in its history; there is also evidence of the purchase of works by painters with whom Spain had not come into actual contact; and as a whole it justifies, despite the change of fashion in art matters by which so much has become of secondary importance, the title ' a gallery of masterpieces.'

National effort — the conscious wish to have, hold, and develop, to enjoy and to sustain to its utmost the instinct for art, as we find it in the artists and patrons, and less consciously in the very social conditions of certain races — has borne fruit in the past in such works as the Acropolis of Athens, the Temple and Precincts of Olympia; in which a society during some generations has done its utmost to enrich that which was felt as the most significant symbol of its effort towards perfection. Something of this spirit has also haunted Italian centres, and in the hands of the two great Medicis we have the evidence of this spirit become conscious and clairvoyant in the patron. In Rome we possess in the Sistina, the halls and chapels of the Vatican, the largest and most noble expression of continued effort that has come down to our time,

revealing as it does the interchange between the artist doing his utmost and the magnificent patron for whom nothing was too fine or too ambitious. Here, if we dismiss the frescoes of Rome, the frescoes and galleries of Florence, we quit art patronage at its noblest, or the formation of art nuclei at their noblest, and turn to centres where this sense was less continuous and to some extent derivative.

It has been the privilege of France, after the waning of her Gothic effort, to continue the work of the Renaissance and its ideal of responsibility towards art, not merely in acquisition, but in maintenance and development; it is owing to this that the Louvre has become pre-eminent — however overcrowded and spoiled by work which only an undue sense of nationality could place by the side of efforts which seriously justify the artistic claim of France as a nation among the artistic nations and centres of the world.

With the Spanish gallery, and the tradition behind it, we have a somewhat analogous case. Charles V., the rival of Francis I., was not, it is true, the typical patron we find in the French king, though the son of the great and magnificent Maximilian. With Charles there was not the same desire to transplant the wonderful growth of the mature Renaissance into his own country;

but, wearied of much, he turned with delight to the art of Titian; or rather a chance meeting with and chance employment of the greatest of Venetians proved an ever-increasing pleasure, till masterpiece after masterpiece became the property of the Emperor and of his much less sympathetic son, to whom art was probably a mere adjunct to piety and pleasure, or if you will, the necessity of a fashion which was not ignoble.

The next addition to Spanish treasure, the next stimulus to acquisition, came with the advent of Rubens, and the tendency he left wherever he went towards the encouragement of the art of his wonderful centre of activity in Antwerp, and also towards the purchase of those masterpieces of Italian easel painting of which there were just then a quantity to be exchanged for money. The scope of this work will not allow discussion of the change that came about in Europe when this accumulated treasure of Italian painting became current in the seventeenth century. At any rate the modern collector, as we understand him, came into existence then — that is, the man who collects works for their beauty or scarceness, as a man collects precious stones. Previous collections had been made mainly in the centres of production themselves; later on by men not only anxious to possess, but to help in the making

and encouragement of art. Of this type the finest in more modern times would be Francis I. of France, Charles I. of England, and — less passionately, or perhaps less consciously — Philip IV. of Spain; with whom dies down the type of royal collector and patron: for the cases of Frederick of Prussia, or Catherine of Russia, are not of the same importance.

From the time of Philip IV. the growing history of the national Spanish collection practically ceases; and if Spain is enriched by the addition of a few French pictures, and the last of her great sons, Goya, has to be studied in Madrid, still the character of the collection remains typical of the sixteenth-century patronage that started it, and of the collector and patron tendencies of the early seventeenth century; it might be even described as the finest extant collection showing the faculty of the seventeenth century for collecting pictures.

Art historians and critics speak of Philip's eminence as a connoisseur, strengthened or even guided as he probably was by one of the world's greatest painters, Velasquez; yet there is a touch of irony after all in the fact that the Prado collection benefited so little by the connoisseurship of Velasquez — himself a passionate student of the Italian art; that second visit of his to Italy,

from which he hoped great things, came just too late, and added little to the collection. One or two Veroneses, not of the first rank, and some Tintorettos and Bassanos, are all that the Spanish painter secured, in which we can detect his predilections. What would we not give for a larger and more fortunate choice of Italian painting made by Velasquez? — to trace the bent of his temper in the masterpieces of others, just as we still can trace in the Angerstine collection in the National Gallery the evidence of a love for generous colour, fresh brush-work, and a certain lustre in the pigments themselves taught to the English by Reynolds and Lawrence, at a time when the rest of Europe valued academic qualities too much.

It has been Spain's good fortune, however, to keep practically intact the work of the greatest of her artists; and we go to Madrid to study Velasquez as we go to other centres to study the easel pictures of no other painter.

Besides this fact, and perhaps above it in importance, the art of Titian in its scope and range can nowhere else be so profoundly felt and understood as in the Prado. To the student the earlier and still Giorgionesque phases of his genius are only represented by the Madonna, No. 236; but 'The Bacchanal' is the culmination after all of that new spirit of delight known in art as the

Giorgionesque, and constitutes its grandest and most impassioned claim upon our attention. Absent is the earlier phase of Titian's portraits under the influence of Giorgione, which make such delightful battlefields for the men of our generation, in which a reputation can be staked and lost upon the curve of an eyebrow or eyelid. Yet Giorgione himself is here in a work of great tenderness and perfection, — if, like most of his authentic works, less stimulating or convincing than its reputation would suggest.

The Louvre, the next finest nucleus of Titian, is, despite its marvellous portraits and pictures, not equal in scope; and it is at Madrid and nowhere else that we really touch the spirit of Titian at a time when the light of his intellect burns duskily, and with a hint amongst the ashes of a keener flame illumining things more fitfully — with those chance flashes as of a torch in the richness of a sanctuary. The genius of Titian in his youth and manhood, so open, as was also the genius of the Renaissance itself, to 'the truth of outward things,' seems to have anticipated at the last much that Rembrandt holds in store for us. In the depth of Titian's old age glimmers a star that was invisible in the daylight of his youth.

Next to Titian and Velasquez the third glory



RUBENS. — THE GARDEN OF LOVE

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of the Prado is in its series of pictures by Rubens. Nowhere do we find precisely the same thing; nothing of Rubens gleaned in the galleries of Antwerp and Vienna, and in the Flemish churches, prepares one for the beauty of some of the works here. If in Flanders and Paris he is epical, in Madrid we find lyrics of a quality it is difficult to match, — a delight, a feast for the eye, a glow and radiance in the touch itself, impossible in larger canvases. To find Rubens painting for his own delight rather than for the wonderment of others, we must go to Munich and to Madrid, to the Prado to see 'The Garden of Love,' 'The Rondo,' 'The Three Graces,' and the sketch of Marie de Medicis. Other works of the master, of a more usual stamp, though they are numerous and unequal — some fifty in all, — dilute, but do not destroy, this impression. In 'The Brazen Serpent' (still given to Rubens) we are face to face with a masterpiece by Van Dyck; one of those astonishing variations on the manner of his master with which his pupil, the precocious and in some sense the spoilt child of painting, sometimes astonishes us — Van Dyck, whom Rubens held at the font of Italian art — or if you will, to whom Rubens and Titian in turn were sponsors.

Of Van Dyck it will be time to speak when we

are brought face to face with the fine subject pieces collected in this gallery: though after the world's masterpieces so far mentioned he seems to fascinate us less as a portrait painter than is his wont. Here, in the Prado, among the twenty-two pictures given to him, we have nothing like the 'Children of Charles' to pit against the royal children by Velasquez; no Madame de Sainte Croix to face Mariana of Austria, no Carew and Killigrew to outface Montañes or Olivarez. As a portrait painter he is here outdone and surpassed; as a painter of pictures, however, he nowhere else equals his 'Betrayal' and his 'Crown of Thorns,' both of which he presented to Rubens, and they place him on a very different level as a painter of pictures from that which he usually occupies.

This collection of ripe and glowing paintings in the Prado, to which we must go to find at its best the gold of Titian, the silver of Velasquez, the glow — no, in this case the pearl-like qualities of Rubens, fails at one point; for one picture alone represents the magic and awe we associate with the name of Rembrandt; or rather does not represent it at all. The 'Artemisia,' about to drink the ashes of her husband presented to her in a costly German cup, is, like many early pictures by the master, on an intellectual level with



REMBRANDT. — ARTEMISIA

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the works of his pupil and imitator Ferdinand Bol, if technically, and in the art of design, it is superior, but not very greatly so. In the forced oppositions of tone, cheap realism and loose drawing, there is a great deal which is open to easy criticism, and nothing in design, intention, or initial effort to compensate for the absence of insight and inspiration we expect from Rembrandt.

So far we have noted in the Prado works that owe their existence, directly or indirectly, to the influence of Titian; his noble influence gilds and makes delicate the restraint of Velasquez. With Rubens, Titian's rival in the world of colour, we find a debt to the great Venetian not merely acknowledged but claimed and insisted upon, in copies of the older master done as a stimulus to invention and to charm himself. One of the great things of the Prado should be a series of copies by Rubens of Titian's 'Loves of the Gods,' — now condemned to a cellar to spare the susceptibilities of the ex-Queen Isabella. To-day we are, however, still spared the 'Adam and Eve,' which outshines in its more obvious sense of gladness in light and noble human flesh the grander picture by Titian of which it is a copy, or more properly speaking an interpretation. In the Prado we find above all things Titian at home, surrounded by his real disciples and lovers —

Rubens, Velasquez, Van Dyck. Not even Watteau is absent, the latest and most retiring of those to whom Titian was, through his Venetian pastorals, the great light beyond. In the two works of Watteau we find evidence of the great colour tradition invented by Titian gleaming in the smaller and more jewel-like touches of the exquisite yet profound Frenchman.

The series of master-works which the student is most anxious to see have been specified broadly as masterpieces of ripe or mature painting, work done in the July and August of its history. The Prado has other claims, and our grandfathers journeyed there, if at all, principally to see the once famous series of Raphaels, and the now perhaps underrated pictures by Murillo.

A certain measure of frankness is no longer necessary for one to say that Raphael would not hold the exalted place he does if the pictures once broadly known as his, and once his greatest asset in public estimation, had alone survived to justify his claim. His frescoes, his portraits and drawings, it is true, would be enough to justify his reputation; but as a painter of easel pictures, his Madonnas would only have entitled him to a place above Fra Bartolommeo and Andrea del Sarto. In Raphael's better easel pictures we praise mainly the more scientific



TITIAN. — ADAM AND EVE

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and accomplished climax of a long series of efforts to which Francia and Bartolommeo had contributed, far more than a phase of art invented and made his own such as we find in the art of Michael Angelo, Titian, and Correggio. As a portrait painter Raphael is comparable to any other painter of portraits; both in his frescoes, and in his easel portrait of Pope Leo x., or of Baldassare Castiglione, he is one of the world's supreme portrait painters. It is the good luck of the Prado to possess one of these masterpieces in the beautiful portrait of 'A Cardinal,' besides one authentic picture, the 'Madonna and the Lamb.' To the lover of pictures the once world-famous series attributed to Raphael in Madrid (the catalogue counts no less than ten) is more a subject of respectful study than one of impassioned interest; the intense sense for finer realities, shown in so many masterpieces around, obscures the somewhat mechanical idealism and pattern of things behind the 'Madonna del Pesce,' and the 'Spasimo di Sicilia.'

Right and left the student finds works of the first rank by other men. The influence of Raphael more than of Bartolommeo, upon a temperament not first-rate, is shown in a fine work of Sarto, 'The Virgin, St. John, and Angel,' perhaps his masterpiece. An echo of the art of Sarto, trans-

muted it is true by one of the most original temperaments in art, blossoms out in the irregular but impassioned art of Correggio; and here we have a picture, not one of the best preserved certainly, but one of startling personal bent, the 'Noli Me Tangere,' — one of the treasures of the Prado, — together with another small, but genuine, picture of the Madonna.

Before leaving this rough list of what the schools of Italy yield us at Madrid, we turn to the less famous specimens of the Northern schools. The attention of the student will have noted that where the Prado falls below the modern standard of a gallery is in the almost total absence of Italian Primitives, Fra Angelico and Mantegna being the two exceptions.

Curiously enough, owing to their hold upon realistic and ascertainable facts, the early Flemings never lost to the same extent their ascendency over the collector, even in the past. The finish, delicacy, and gloss of their work has always held its own. The finest collectors prized their Rogier Van der Weyden, their Petrus Cristus; or failing them, the more casual products of Flanders which did duty as genuine Van Eycks or Van der Weydens; and in this matter the Prado has a few works to show of great charm, and one masterpiece, 'The Adoration of the Magi,' attributed



DÜRER. — PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF

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to Memlinc — in part a repetition or rather elaboration of the Bruges picture.

The early German schools are richly represented, if not in actual numbers, at least in the quality of a few masterpieces. Foremost among these rare treasures of German painting preserved in the Prado is Dürer's famous portrait of himself of 1498, of which there exists a good copy in the Uffizi: — in that strange and promiscuous place, the Painters' Portrait Gallery, with its prominent canvases still recording the names of forgotten artists with something of the pomp of the old flattering epitaphs of dead important nobodies. It was doubtless an agreeable recollection of the panel in the Uffizi which led Sir Walter Armstrong to dismiss the original in the Prado as a copy; to the present writer this generally accepted work is not only an original painting by Dürer, but one of his masterpieces of portraiture, like the 'Oswolt Krell' at Munich; comparable in charm if not in intensity and gravity to that other likeness of the artist, dated 1500, also at Munich, before which one forgets all other portraits whatsoever, in the sense that this perfect realization of one of the world's greatest men is equal to the occasion; that physical and intellectual beauty in the sitter are one with the perfection of art interpreting them, and,

before a work like this, one wonders if Dürer's unfailing skill of hand, his fertility as a designer, can really be valued above this evidence of his mere eyesight. This picture is one of the few masterpieces in the Prado which is hung too high, though it is only placed above the superb portrait of Imhof by the same master.

The life-size panels of 'Adam' and 'Eve' count with the less attractive 'Lucrezia' at Munich amongst Dürer's efforts in painting, made perhaps from a somewhat academic or didactic standpoint. It is curious to note that these figures are in their pose less reminiscent of the famous print of 1504 than of a drawing made in preparation for it, now in the Albertina, in which the figure of Eve is posed like the Adam at Madrid, whilst the Adam is placed somewhat like the Eve at the Prado. These two famous panels are dated 1507; their dusky colouring, notably in the figure of the Adam, would point to a Venetian influence in the workmanship, such as we find in those two portraits by Dürer that are reminiscent of Antonello da Messina; the one, dated 1507, being in Vienna, the other, one of the greatest treasures in England, badly hung in Hampton Court. This last represents a man whom we find again in the damaged 'Crown Fest' of Prague.



DÜRER — PORTRAIT OF HANS IMHOF

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But let us turn to the portrait of Imhof, a keen-looking man in hat and furs who holds a scroll. This picture is one of Dürer's masterpieces, and fortunately for us it is also in a perfect state of preservation. The expression of the face is haunting in its intensity, the workmanship is no less searching. One feels before this face that Dürer has striven to express the purpose of a life, so piercing yet inward are the eyes, so firm and nervous the rendering of the shut mouth and clenched hand.

We change, not the quality or frankness of the art, but the name, on leaving this masterpiece of Dürer's maturity to look at the portrait attributed to Holbein and formerly given to Albert Dürer, with whose method and design it has an unusual affinity.

Holbein, the Raphael of the North, here uses the privilege of his Italian prototype by astonishing us, used as we are in his work to an extraordinary sense of balance and control, by an equally astonishing frankness and insistence of vision. Here, in the grand and almost terrible ugliness of the sitter, Raphael's Pope Leo x. is quite outfaced. Once only has Holbein dwelt upon physical deformity with equal insistence, in the superb portrait of Wareham, the Archbishop of Canterbury, now in the Louvre. The ugliness of the unknown man in the Prado is of a nobler cast; above

the enormous nose Holbein has painted two intelligent eyes; the mouth is shrewd; the thumb and finger join as they might with one used to the handling of money. One thinks instinctively of those all-powerful merchants of the Middle Ages who built fleets and were the familiars of the wisest princes, to whom they lent fortunes.

The interest of the Spanish school, outside the achievement of Velasquez, the greatest and most genial of her sons, is great; yet it is often overrated — in the bulk it is neither first-rate nor second-rate; if its finer work is more naïve, less affected, than that of the eclectic Italians and Tenebrosi, it remains in fact an offshoot of theirs in method, if not entirely in spirit.

Two elements in the Spanish school have made for its popularity: on the one hand, a sombre strain reflecting a part of Spanish life, or rather history, has attracted the Romanticists of 1830 and Baudelaire, who has been wittily described as the unfrocked priest of Romanticism:' on the other hand, a certain literalness has seemed to the realistic generation following that of 1830, to Courbet and Manet, a confirmation of their own aims. Both veins of thought are French, it is true, but for the last twenty years the current language of art has been French.



HOLBEIN. — PORTRAIT OF AN UNKNOWN

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We now find in the Prado, since the Exhibition of a few years ago, an important collection of the whimsical, perverse, but also fascinating works of Theotocopuli, known as El Greco, the Greco-Venetian painter, who should be called a Veneto-Spaniard. If we have left for further consideration the origins of Spanish painting, where it echoes with a provincial accent the art of Flanders and the decadent art of Italy, and start with El Greco as the first of the Spanish school, it is because the works of Sánchez Coello are of slighter interest; because the early and merely decorative art of Spain, founded on the methods of the Flemings, is still to be sought for mainly in the churches for which it was painted; that, admitting some slight injustice to Sánchez Coello, before El Greco there was nothing in Spanish painting that is of general interest.

The world which El Greco painted is seen by flashes of lightning and in a spirit of hallucination and solar eclipse, when the dead seem to walk with the living. We have little in the Prado by this painter that shows the further disintegration of his art, the extremes of his Toledan manner; yet even at his worst and most whimsical we note an expressive use of the brush and of the qualities of his pigment.

Ribera, Zurbaran, are both well represented

in solid, realistic, and austere canvases — the first to the full bent of his unequal but great faculties. If Ribera at his average is only the most realistic of the Tenebrosi, at his best he is one of the great masters; the large room given over to him represents his work in every phase.

Zurbaran uses in his work a more impassioned quality of prose, if I may use the expression, but he is not represented in the Prado to the full bent of his talent, and he should be studied at Seville.

One of the curious facts about the Spanish school is that to a close outlook upon Nature it added a quality of gravity, not to say austerity, that it saw Nature more sadly than it saw it whole — therein lies the strength of Ribera and Zurbaran. This criticism does not apply to Velasquez: as stated before, this most gifted of the sons of Spain had, inside certain limitations of invention and vision, a quality of artistic and intellectual nimbleness denied to his fellow-countrymen; and if, in the estimate of the art of the world, Velasquez remains Spanish, or brings a note that could have come from Spain only, still in its quality that element had sunned itself in Italy. His essence is more genial, more delicately natural; we quit the atmosphere of the cellar, the cell, at times even of the charnel-house,

to enter upon more room, more air and light; a courtlier and kindlier sense of things pervades his work; we no longer think of the callousness of Rome or the large shadows of Africa; and we can forget the Inquisition.

An estimate of that curious mood we find south of the Pyrenees only should properly be kept for a later chapter of this book. The Spanish gloom in art was crossed, it is true, by equally strange outbursts of florid sentiment or sentimentality, which we find in Roelas, Murillo, and Valdes Leal, and from these also Velasquez was free.

It is unnecessary now to state more than that at the Prado we find Velasquez at home, that all his masterpieces, with the exception of four or five scattered in Rome, London, and above all in Vienna, are still to be found in Madrid; it is here alone that we can estimate to the full his range as an artist.

In painting, the more florid phase we find in Spanish literature, architecture, and decoration flickers in the demonstrative, sentimental, and amiable work of Murillo, once so esteemed and now so fallen in popular estimation; of this there is a room full. It is needless to add, that to the impartial student of art the Prado now offers the best standard by which to judge of this accomplished but often merely meretricious artist:

and it is only fair to say that for better or for worse he reveals himself in these specimens (among which we find many formerly in the academy of St. Ferdinand) as at least able to satisfy himself; that, in fact, one understands his hold technically upon certain schools of the past, his fascination for the artists of the eighteenth century. Here are yards of yellow glories, with woolly clouds and woolly angels, surrounding a peasant model in prayer doing duty for the 'Immaculate Conceptions' and 'Purissimas' and 'Virgins in Ecstasy';—a sentimental ecstasy, amiable, tearful and bland; but how far removed from that passionate gravity of Titian's Virgin in 'The Assunta,' or the Madonnas in ecstasy or contemplation of a Mantegna or even a Crivelli! Let us look, but pass. How much of this belongs to the cheap melodies of another period, a period of unblushing trills and mechanical roulades; how much of this in its technical accomplishment is not even the furniture of art, but its upholstery! It is difficult to be just to the many Murillos in the Prado, or, for that matter, to the bulk of the Spanish school. Here we are surrounded by the greatest series of Titians in the world; an impassioned sense of beauty, an impassioned gravity, is revealed for our delight. Here, with Rubens, we are initiated into what was most

rich and delicate in the inimitable resource of one who was a prince amongst painters by his own effort and election. Here we have Velasquez at his steadiest and best. Next to these we have Raphael in the ' Portrait of a Cardinal,' Giorgione and Correggio, to persuade and fascinate. We have the earnestness of Dürer and Holbein in portraiture: among such chosen things the local characteristics and limitations of Spanish art are ill at ease.

Even the less eminent Northern painters surprise one by their excellence, and — as with Antonio Moro — Jordaens startles the spectator by the naturalistic beauty of his ' Family Group,' with its contented mother and child and engaging brother and sister, seen, not in the golden atmosphere of a Rubens or a Van Dyck, but yet in a reflected and more homely glow of a rich evening in a day of contentment. In such company it is undoubtedly difficult to do justice to the Spaniards, and one approaches the astonishing art of Goya with a sense that one is unprepared for the experimental work of this first of the moderns. This man shares with Constable the sponsorship of much that is recent in effort and aim — all, in fact, that has claimed, not to be good, but to be unconventional. Goya is, in this sense, the first of the modern painters, eclectic and com-

posite as much of his work shows itself to be. It is a curious fact that at the most conservative of courts, and in the shadow of the Inquisition itself, this daring and brilliant exponent of personality and ' impressionism ' in art and thought should have found shelter and encouragement. Underneath the weight of orthodoxy and tradition his epoch may have sunned itself enough, and been self-satisfied and limited in range of perception as was the eighteenth century itself — and of this worldliness we find evidence in Goya's work; yet, lurking in the phases of his practice which he caught from Longhi and Tiepolo and even lesser men, or that he had studied in his better moments in the grave and balanced art of Velasquez, runs a current of unrest; and he goes with the world to its occupations, a spectator, it is true, but one armed with scalpel and with knife, with which he sometimes cuts into this society drifting towards the revolution. Fantastic, gay, bitter, and cruel, one feels at times that the scent of blood was in his nostrils. This man of the world of the eighteenth century grows bitter like a Casanova grown old, and his art gazes into gulfs, which Baudelaire searched later, for that which was new and strange. Fantastic, gay, bitter, and cruel, this astonishing man has, curiously enough, only found descend-

ants in painters like Manet, who approached art and nature as if the eye was without memory: his manner has been caught by the modern fashion for the study of tones and values, by men of the school of 'disinterest.' Yet his was one of the most various, perverse, and searching intellects in the history of painting — an intellect guided more by experiment and curiosity than by that sense of control and construction which is the spirit of art itself. Certainly, to the student, the contrast shown in the Prado between Goya's efforts and the art of Titian should be stimulating enough, and full of subject for very mixed and various reflections. Many of his paintings here are unfortunately ill lit and hung. The collection has recently been enriched by works from the Escorial, the Academy of St. Ferdinand, and the Osuna collection.

The survey of the Spanish school as it is shown in Madrid has carried us away from that moment in the history of the national Spanish collection when, with the Bourbon dynasty, the collection of French pictures came into Spain, which in their kind are often fine and important. It is a curious jump backwards from the feverish art of Goya, the last of Spain's great artists, in which all is audacity and experiment, to the stately and self-absorbed art of Nicolas Poussin. The series

of his paintings here (of which there are no less than eighteen) is unrivalled outside the Louvre, and undiluted in effect by his influence upon the work of weaker intellects as we find it in Paris. His art is represented largely but not entirely by that phase when, in a heavier and more emphatic key, he remembered the gold, scarlet, and blue of Titian's classical pieces 'The Bacchanal' and 'The Garden of Loves.' In this stately but composite art we shall be able to trace the influence for harm of the Aldobrandini frescoes, and the influence of Domenichino, now so little praised as an artist and so forgotten.

The ideality, the pomposity perhaps of a whole period, is echoed in the work of Poussin, but also its effort towards perfection and its sense of responsibility. This 'Last of the Romans' touches Bacchic subjects and the world of sensuality with some of the scholastic gravity of a Milton; — in a field, in which so much is hoarded and combined, blooms a strange blossom of his own, a large, spacious, and perhaps somewhat scentless flower; how different from the racy flower of Venetian art! Among his canvases a small Bacchic picture, once in the possession of Carlo Maratta, ranks with 'The Infancy of Bacchus' in the National Gallery in the unusually racy quality and charm it displays. The 'Par-

nassus,' the 'Meleager,' are both works of the greatest importance; to these should be added three landscapes hung too high, and two other important works, a 'St. Cecilia' and 'David, vanquisher of Goliath.' Some four or five good but darkened pictures attributed to him, and hung too high, remain.

The series of Claudes enjoys a reputation which may seem justified to the admirers of such things. In number they are considerable, some twenty-five in all; not all genuine, however. Le Nain, the most Spanish of Frenchmen, is absent. But among rare things here we have two pictures by Watteau, that delicate painter of nostalgia, and the regret for perfect things. Not the first of the small masters, but the last of the inventive artists in the great Venetian tradition of holiday time; — but with him a holiday time that sings in a minor key, for Watteau, like Tiepolo, is a creative artist of an artificial paradise, but his is a paradise of fading things; Tiepolo, the other magician of the eighteenth century, is less a poet than the stage manager of poetic effects. The eighteenth century on the Continent, which was so satisfied with itself, had these two men who escaped into a world of romance: the great Italian, the last of the great Italians; and the moody and exquisite Frenchman who caught

at beauty and grace with the eagerness of the consumptive, the man doomed to live but a little. Of the two works, the 'Accordée de Village' and the 'Fête dans le Jardin de Saint Cloud,' the first is one of several variants, but original this time; it represents that phase of Watteau's art which Lancret was to exploit; it is a work lacking conciseness in mood, and as a composition it is small and scattered. The other is of a finer quality both as a work of art and as a painting. It shows a paradise of fountains and fountain-like trees, and the touch and colour have the charm and broken quality of the large 'Fête' in Hertford House.

This survey of the treasures of the Prado shows what good company the art-lover may expect. The Prado is a treasure-house of ripe painting; painters have called 'Las Meninas' and 'Las Hilanderas' the dictionaries of painting. The 'Bacchanal' of Titian and the 'Garden of Loves;' — each was in itself a treasure-house to Rubens, Van Dyck, Domenichino, Fiammingo, and Poussin. The gallery is rich in numbers and in quality, and we may overlook the 'important' work by unimportant persons.

The student, the specialist, may study the Spanish school at his ease; its more casual works are not obtrusively thrust forward. The Dutch



WATTEAU. — FÊTE IN THE GARDEN OF ST. CLOUD

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school is badly represented, though there are yards of Teniers and Brughel de Vellours for those who like them. One might well wish for a small Terborch, who carried into the Netherlands inside his small but nacrous palette some of the austere charm in black and white and grey of Velasquez himself.

The Prado is a rich man's gallery, but it is so to a great extent without the pomp and dulness that term implies; we wonder at the chance, the perfect good luck, that has presided at its making. It is only on second thoughts that we realise that its contents might have been even finer; that it was made mainly at a period of unique opportunities, and that it contains too much which is of secondary importance. By repeated fires in royal palaces some masterpieces were lost, before the collection here shown had left the walls of the royal residences. The series of eleven Cæsars by Titian, with the twelfth by Van Dyck has disappeared, and a perusal of Crowe and Cavalcaselle reveals the disappearance through fire and neglect of other great works by Titian. Still in private hands in England will be found the miraculous 'Diana and Actæon,' and the 'Diana and Callisto' by Titian, once in the Prado. America now boasts the 'Rape of Europa,' refused by the National Gallery for

the price of an important Romney. Royal magnificence or indifference has also lost to Spain Correggio's 'Madonna of the Basket,' in the National Gallery, and Correggio's 'Agony in the Garden,' now at Apsley House. Velasquez has also suffered by fire; and in England we find 'The Water Drinkers,' the finest of the Bodegone pictures by Velasquez; the sketch for 'Las Meninas;' and, more important still, the 'Venus,' given away also by a royal wave of the hand.

Chance is mainly responsible for the spirit presiding at the formation of the national collection; chance has also protected the Prado from a dead weight of too much bad minor Dutch painting, and the overwhelming effect of the academic efforts of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Chance has kept the bulk of the old royal collections in Spain; it has to some extent preserved the pictures of the Prado from that awful blight of repainting which haunts the art-lover in the galleries of Italy; and until recently, when Velasquez was over-cleaned for his tercentenary, no grave abuse had impaired the masterpieces of the Prado. As in England, a certain indolence in art matters had saved most of the pictures from the grotesque tampering with their shapes which we find in the Louvre, for instance.

Chance until recently has spared us the tampering with authentic works, this adulterating of excellence brought about by the cleaner, the restorer: but the canvases by Velasquez in Vienna, in England, in public and private hands, make us aware that with the venerable dust and dirt which obscured the Prado pictures a few years ago have been removed some of the delicate glazes also; that the crude vision of the restorer, one of the advocates of 'la peinture claire,' I should think, has made possible the minimizing of Velasquez's message, — brought him 'up to date' in fact, as in the past Raphael was brought in line with C. Marrata and Sassoferato, or Correggio made young again at the fountain of Giordano's art or that of Pietro da Cortona. Time, with its delicate alteration of the varnishes, may again temper the new crudity of some of the works of Velasquez that have been overcleaned. But the trace of time is an accidental charm; though undoubtedly a charm, its effect is different from that of the entirely intellectual work of the artist himself modifying tones, and fretting his surfaces. The art-lover will therefore find in some works of Velasquez here harder browns and a more flat use of blue than in other master-works of his; every allowance being made for the fact that some of these larger pictures

were more boldly planned and contrasted in colour — to be seen as decorations in the dark rooms of the Buen Retiro and the Alcazar.

On the whole the pictures are fairly well preserved, fairly well housed and well lit. The art-lover is well repaid if he visits the Prado, although he might wish that private munificence would make possible the addition of a representative picture by Rembrandt to this congress of master painters.

The Prado is a gallery for painters, and has been a Mecca for many modern artists. To the student the unrivalled series of Titians seems to enjoy less a success of admiration than of reputation, and no estimate of Rubens is quite definite without a sight of his masterpieces here. Such in a rough estimate is the Prado for the lover of pictures.

CHAPTER II

THE SPANISH SCHOOL BEFORE VELASQUEZ

THE origins of the Spanish school are not fully shown, or perhaps adequately shown, in the Prado: and the foregoing summary of its contents has made no secret of the fact that, viewed as a whole, the position of Spain as a productive art centre is a secondary one. In its main current it is always derivative, if it is marked in its temper by a certain gravity or earnestness. This might be said to be still further enhanced by something latent in the race itself, a touch of Roman materialism and gravity — which is perhaps less Roman in this case after all than a reflection of an African indolence and indifference. On this soil grow intermittingly the blossoms of a strange pietism, at times austere, at times effusive.

The Spanish aptitude for art was sincere enough if without continuity; it has remained unconscious of those nobler and more constructive efforts which have made certain centres inexhaust-

ible fields of artistic inspiration and achievement.

In its earlier phase Spanish painting was the offshoot of the Flemish school of the fifteenth century, which it slavishly imitated; more often the works preserved were done actually by itinerant Flemings and derelict Italians. The next wave in fashion was Italian, and in the quality of its output Spanish art was still less conspicuous and fortunate. It was only at the contact with the Italian Tenebrosi and decadents that Spain rose to a level at which she could compete with Italy herself; still her artistic formula was not of her own invention, though it somehow suited her temper, and she could perfectly assimilate it. The Spanish school is in its average but an offshoot of the late Italian school.

I would attribute this failure in Spanish effort in part to historical causes, more still to some limitation inherent in the race, which is one of the oldest in European history. That sudden or gradual contact of the North with the South which has been so fertile in the history of civilisation, 'in which the man from the North has found his bride in the South,' has never quite been the lot of Spain; rather, twice in her history, has the South — Africa, Semitic Africa — held the Peninsula.

Spain suffered the Roman conquest but never developed the aptitude for the old classical refinement which Southern Gaul retained for centuries. The new Northern blood was spilt and thinned in the wars against the Moors, whose languid and late refinement the Spaniard was also unable to assimilate or understand.

Spain inherited her share of the Renaissance only at a time when the counter-Renaissance, the Catholic revival, had obtained: and something taciturn and indolent in the race has made it unable to forget the influence of the Inquisition, which policy and rapine had established there.

To the present writer, the sombre gravity which has fascinated the onlooker in things Spanish is not so far removed from the stately and simple indifference behind which the African and the Arab hide a total absence of thought.

Whatever has come to us as strictly Spanish is late in aim, late in effort; the love of magnificence alone fostered the arts; a certain materialism as of a late Roman satisfied Spain's craving for the beautiful, for all that which, with more nimble and more happily inspired races, opens up endless fields of selection and intellectual excitement. Altogether Spanish art appears the latest comer in the hierarchy of the schools — its very bursts of florid emotion and piety are

mature in their essence. Spain is old; one might think she never had been young.

The land itself is full of melancholy, with its battlement-like rocks, the monotonous sweep of its sierras, its sombre or grey vegetation which suddenly at the touch of spring blossoms out into a short but magical season of flowers.

The towns, the houses and villages, gather up the shade, and close themselves to the day, which is at times that of Africa, large and immobile in its light, large and immobile in its shadows. It may be following an artistic figure of thought too far to liken the Spanish aptitude for what was sombre and solid in art and architecture to the character of the country itself: and to liken the contrasting outbursts of florid effort — such as the composite Cathedral of Seville, some late painting of the seventeenth century, and the outbursts of art patronage that lasted rarely more than two sequent generations — to the sudden breaking out of the spring in that country.

At times the Spanish temper breaks out also into some large and decorative blossom, with the obvious glare of a Catholic monstrance, the sudden and emphatic aspect of some African exotic that blossoms out of a cactus growth coloured like a stone or like dust upon grass —

and we have the painting of Herrera. An Italian influence will temper these florid outbursts, and thus we have the influence of Baroccio upon Murillo.

Something abrupt and cactus-like in growth is characteristic of Spanish civilisation itself. The art of Spain rarely suggests a society of admirable persons; its artistic manifestations fulfil the requirements of the patron, or rise from the lower levels of society to paint the beggar, the monk, and shadows of cell and kitchen.

Spain, in shaking off the Moor, became a meeting-place for the less talented artists of Europe. No direct trace remains of the visit of Jan Van Eyck to the Peninsula. Hosts of Flemings were employed in the Church, on those large gilded reredoses that still look imposing enough in the Spanish sanctuaries they furnish with their traditional treatment of sacred subject and rich use of gilding — now incense-stained and coloured by that added gold brought by time, which may not inaptly be described as sanctuary colour, strange blending as it is of the effects of time, dust, and light.

We have seen a somewhat analogous fever for magnificent building in centres like the Milan of the Sforzas; and in the Milanese Cathedral we find some of the ostentation and emphatic

purpose of Spanish art during the fifteenth century — as seen in Seville, for instance.

Architecture in Spain, when it develops a national character, or rather when we notice it in a national accent, expresses a spirit of pride and magnificence — it is a rich man's architecture; it is, nevertheless, a more consistent witness to the nobility and persistence of the Spanish character than anything we shall find in the main current of its painting; outside the art of Velasquez the Spanish school seems to have expressed the artisan cast of the nation.

Spanish painting is therefore without the creative and intellectual force which in Italy gives the impression that art was the work of giants in the world of thought and will. It remains subservient to the everyday requirements of the Church; literal, not to say prosy in its outlook, it may well have been patronised by the prince and prelate much in the spirit in which baseness and ugliness is patronised by courts, as an escape from the stress of fine responsibilities and fine circumstances, and somewhat in the manner in which the Spanish Crown patronised its idiots and dwarfs.

Art in Spain responded to the requirement of the rich. It springs up at command, like the Palace of the Escorial, in a wilderness. It does



SÁNCHEZ COELLO. — PORTRAIT OF DON CARLOS

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not reflect the finer and more genial types; Spain catches at art as a result, a fashion to be imitated.

In the sixteenth century the country became overrun by third-rate imitators of the grand style: Michael Angelo, as he was understood by Daniele da Volterra; imitators of Raphael as he appeared to Giulio Romano. If in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries architecture in Spain was mainly French, and in the fifteenth century all the arts were mainly Flemish, so in the sixteenth century all influences were Italian, and Spain absorbed the work of Torrigiano and Leo Leoni in sculpture, sending forth and drawing home again men who in their time figured as obscure assistants of the great Italian masters.

The decoration of the Escorial may be taken as typical of the growth and death of Italian art as it had been transplanted into Spain.

With Philip II. the arts strove under the double weight of orthodoxy in art and orthodoxy in thought. Sánchez Coello, the Spanish imitator of Antonio Moro, has painted portraits of that period which have a haunting appeal in their rendering of character — character suppressed, stifled and wistful, as we find it in the Royal portraits in the Prado of Don Carlos and the Infanta Isabella, and the yet more vivid portrait of Don Carlos at Parma. In these works we note

the austere and reticent taste in jewels which the gloom of the Spanish Court had made fashionable, a taste in accessory decoration through which Spain has often shown character and beauty.

In the later fifteenth century, Spanish painting may be said to have shown greater activity than it did later in the sixteenth, but the painters of the Argonese school, of the schools of Castille and of Seville, are Flemings or Neo-Flemings; and the specimens in the Prado make one praise the conservative spirit in Spain which has left the anconas and reredoses in the churches they still furnish.

The early efforts of Spanish art, whether Flemish, German, or, as in the case of Pedro (?) Berruguete, a cross between late Flemish and Italian, belong mainly to the field of the archæologist. This is unjust to Berruguete, who, within his limitations, shows a certain fervour and personality and a curious left-handed influence of Carpaccio crossing his Flemish conventions; but it is not unjust to such painters as Diego Correa, the dull imitator of Bartolommeo, or to Vicente de Juanes, Pedro Campaña and the formal face painters, Pantoja de la Cruz and Bartolomé Gonzales.

Great piety and earnestness are terms we

constantly find used to express the national character of Spanish art, yet this piety itself has never touched those levels we find in the arts of other nations. The enchanting and perhaps unique temperament of Fra Angelico need not be challenged. On a lower level of pietistic expression we have the grave and delicate art of Memlinc. This also is too severe a test for Spain, and the nickname, 'the Spanish Memlinc,' given to Morales, is but a guide-book definition. The intense and sometimes mannered pietism of a Carlo Crivelli is also too delicate, too fine: and we need not conjure up those instances of a passionate piety we find in the greater Italians — Mantegna, for instance; the note struck here would be too intellectual and too strong for the Spanish temperament.

The influence of Michael Angelo flickers in the unequal but often admirable work of the sculptor, Alonso Berruguete, in his alabaster statuettes at San Benito in Valladolid and in the Cathedral of Toledo; Pedro Campaña, the eclectic Flemish painter, may be judged and dismissed by the small picture in the National Gallery; Juanes fills with Neo-Italian tedium his place in the Prado.

It is only with the advent of the Greco-Venetian, Theotocopuli, known as El Greco, that Spanish

painting commands for the first time the attention of the general student of painting.

El Greco was trained in Venice, and in his earlier manner is a pure Venetian, influenced by the work of the Bassani and stimulated by the manner of Tintoretto. He was born in Crete in 1548 and died at Toledo in 1614. This painter developed on Spanish soil a style that seems almost more Spanish in temper than the work of any born and bred Spaniard till the advent of Goya, in whom all the national traits find expression. Outwardly the more central of El Greco's work seems founded entirely upon Tintoretto at his wildest and most mannered phase; his figures are torn to shreds by a wind of passion, by an extravagant effort at impressiveness. His method in portraits recalls the method of the Bassani; but with time the fever latent in his art takes a form more acute, and in his Toledan manner the Venetian influence burns less visibly. Realities are then supplanted by a series of conventions of his own; the Venetian methods are finally replaced by the most wilful experiments in form and colour and in the use of pigment; human forms are twisted and stretched into mere symbols of themselves, or into symbols of passion and movement. A wish to be inspired and original at all costs clashes with the staid ten-

dency of the Spanish temper, it is true; yet where out of Spain could so strange and perverted a vision of things have found acceptance; when, save in the reign of Philip II.?

His pictures might at times have been painted by torchlight in a cell of the Inquisition. Philip II. in his old age might have so painted, had he been given the faculty to paint. El Greco's 'Vision of Philip II.' might have actually risen before the recluse of the Escorial himself, when after so much done and undone, after so many acts of faith, he lay dying by inches under the black velvet of his bed; when under the horse-hair shirt he felt the approach of eternity, and beyond the incense fumes and the smoke of the tapers stood the goal of all his effort.

At times Theotocopuli is a sincere and almost naïve artist: in portraits of small surface area and unambitious scope he is quite excellent: at times his feverish workmanship has the 'qualities of its defects' (if we may be pardoned this transposition of a French phrase which nevertheless expresses perfectly the singular case presented to us in the work of El Greco).

We understand the power to disturb which the religious revival brought in its wake, when we touch the art of El Greco — a sense of trouble has been detected even in the late work of Titian

himself. If we turn to the art of Tintoretto, who was the main influence upon El Greco, the tendency to agitation seems to spring from a different source, even in such works as the ' Holy Supper ' at St. Giorgio Maggiore, with its fantastic torchlight, and presence of spiritual forms in the air of the room itself. The aim of Tintoretto was sensational, but eloquent in its sensationalism; its tendency was declamatory and romantic, tending always towards an emphatic statement of dramatic or romantic effects. With El Greco the imaginative impulse flickers and twists upon itself; there is even less balance than in the Italian; there is even less room, less breathing-space for sequence of thought, or for constructive vision; he gives you a sort of shorthand of Tintoretto, and later on mere jottings and hints at a method of his own; at times his figures have the lithe and trenchant aspect of a sword.

The colour of his whites and crimsons is ashen, his blacks livid, his blues remind one of the blues of steel, his use of green is constant and unusual for painting of his time.

Light with him becomes a quantity for emotional appeal only, to be focussed or scattered at will, and he will paint the sky black or a bitter green.

The influence of Veronese's early manner has been instanced as the first influence upon the aspect of his earliest and least individualised works; yet nothing could be more remote in temper and tendency than these two painters. Had Veronese, with his unbounded and almost monotonous control over plastic effect, painted only the strange little 'Crucifixion' in the Louvre, with its strange green sky, its strange and chilly colour, the difference between the Venetian master and the Spanish mannerist would still be immense. His more ascetic and monkish canvases degenerate into what looks like a parody of himself; he even at times turns away from his curious palette, and with blue-black, white, and brown, produces a yet more bitter, I had almost said discordant, result.

No one would apply to the work of El Greco the statement that art is the expression of that which the artist likes best in life; his choice would seem to have been governed by another craving, and to have been of the nature that makes a man lean over a precipice to see if he will feel faint and dizzy, or a patient touch a wound to see if it will hurt.

This estimate of El Greco gives him an undue importance perhaps, for his work is more individual than original, and the possession of individ-

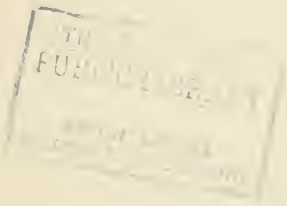
uality does not suffice for art; originality must be fine in its essence, not the mere expression of personal limitations as with El Greco; and above originality stands the creative power, that noblest expression with which modern criticism hardly ever concerns itself at all.

The personality or originality of El Greco is too thin, too whimsical, too arbitrary to command absolute praise. His was in no sense a constructive temperament; his originality as a painter consists largely in his power of scattering and decomposing the convention of others.

His human type, when he condescends in his pictures to give attention to this, is a low one, much lower than Tintoretto's; a dilated eye does duty for expression. The 'Descent of the Holy Spirit,' still uncatalogued at the Prado, shows this unwillingness to realise things plastically, and his trust to a wild form of improvisation; yet the picture attracts by its flame-like aspect. The 'Baptism of Christ' in the Prado is a more responsible work. One detects in the extravagant mannerism of the forms an idealising tendency, notably in the delicate hands and long feet; the angels, with their doll-like faces, support a large crimson mantle, in itself a delightful 'painter's motive,' forming as it does a sort



EL GRECO. — THE TRINITY



of niche for the figure of the Saviour; the St. John shows a sensitiveness of type we find sometimes in El Greco's portraits; at his feet is the stump of a felled tree and an axe; but where the art-lover is charmed out of criticism is in the treatment of the heaven above, in which we forget the small doll-like faces of the spirits in the visionary and instantaneous effect of the whole, the blotches of vivid electric cloud in which dart and shimmer the flame-like forms of little baby angels, each in its little world of cloud and light; they are like birds who, thrown up into the air, tumble and quiver before regaining the use of their wings. We find further evidence of painter's delight in the mottled sky and the three white mitres of the 'St. Bernard' hanging near. In a fine early picture of the Ascension painted when El Greco was twenty-three (lent by the Infanta Isabella of Bourbon), we notice a more careful, a more thoroughly worked-out attempt at that originality El Greco strove for all his life under the accusation of being an imitator of Titian and Tintoretto; in this and in the 'Trinity' here produced there is more variety in the heads, a more plastic use of the brush, a more vivid use of colour, green, crimson, straw-yellow, blue, orange, lavender, and a sort of vinous and stain-like quality in the paint itself.

Velasquez remembered the colour of this work in his 'Coronation of the Virgin.'

We cannot deny to El Greco a certain visionary quality; a poor replica hangs in the Prado of his 'Burial of the Count of Organza,' the original being at Toledo. This picture shares with his 'Theban Legion' at the Escorial the claim to be El Greco's most typical work. Against a space of abstract colour flickers the light of a few torches, which illumine a row of vivid portrait heads, cut off by their white ruffs and isolated in space; seen out of relation to each other, yet dominated by a sense of awe and piety. Some are ecstatic, others self-absorbed; below this band of fervent faces glimmers the exaggerated whiteness, the exaggerated elegance, of a few hands; and the central group, at first dominated by the row of spectators, emerges from the gloom in flashes of gold, white, steel-blue, as the noble figure of an old bishop bends beneath the weight of a man in armour whom they are about to entomb, and who is supported also by a deacon in embroidered vestments. The group is admirably invented, full of a passionate awe and tenderness; the shroud of grey-white against the black armour, the large white mitre of the bishop, are all admirable 'painter's inventions.' The upper part of the picture is a confused and swaying mass of

angels and holy persons drifting on large strata of strange cloud forms, lit from within. El Greco's human type, even in his portraits, is odd, fervent, pointed in brow and lacking in back and base to the cranium; there is fervour and elegance in his work, which on the average is whimsical and hasty.

This decadent artist has at least one virtue, which we find in several decadents — that in aim, if fatuous, he was not common-place. Sensational, impatient, and extravagant as he is, El Greco never meant to appeal to common and comfortable ideals. He also saves us from that somewhat unthinking and unemotional point of view which marks the decadent but by no means unattractive or unimportant work of mannerists such as the Italians Parmigianino and Baroccio.

But what is decadence? Below the surface of much decadent art lies, unbalanced it is true, a wish to stimulate and charm, such as is ever present in classical art itself. I am reminded of the confession of a drunkard, whose excuse for getting drunk was 'not that he liked drinking, but he liked to see things more interesting than they were.' In this sense El Greco wished to make things seem 'more interesting than they were,' but unlike most decadents his method was limited and often insufficient, and like Blake

the mystic he was not always as much under the influence of his artistic or spiritual Dæmon as he imagined. With El Greco the spectator is invited to a display of artistic fireworks which does not always come off, but unmistakably smokes and sputters.

We have not applied the word 'decadent' to El Greco to indicate a merely decaying and derelict type, such as each school and nation may show at times, men who are merely bad artists and poor craftsmen; in this sense the popular English painter may be a decadent, however 'popular' or 'wholesome' his aim, whether he paints 'Cattle in a Surrey Field' or 'Well-known Footsteps.' El Greco belongs to a genuine type of artist in whom the proper balance between aim and achievement is disturbed by something feverish and lacking in the sense of intellectual responsibility. He belongs to a class of artists in whom we find, on a different level, even such great names as Botticelli and Tintoretto — men in whom the romantic effort oversets or strains the plastic sense to a dangerous point, a hasty effort not always sufficient or significant; and beneath these great artists we may still admire lesser men such as Filippino Lippi, Bazzi, and those later mannerists in paint and form such as the Bassani, whose efforts were

insufficient; Parmigianino, who is fatuous and monotonous; and Baroccio, who inherited some of the charm and all the weakness of Correggio. With these painters we must place El Greco. In the art of Theotocopuli, who was Spanish only by adoption, we notice some of the extravagant intensity latent in the Spanish character itself, which Spanish painting has hardly ever reflected.

Professor Justi has noted the anticipation of the true Spanish school with the development of the painter Juan de las Roelas (1560-1625), whose works doubtless anticipate that leaning upon the Italian Tenebrosi, or rather that influence of the painting of Caravaggio, which is persistent in the Spanish school of the seventeenth century; the pictures at the Prado hardly justify this praise. The elder Herrera is in temperament Spanish enough; he is Roelas' rival in the claim to be founder of the Spanish school. Let it be said at once, the interest of his art is entirely parochial: he is less original than emphatic and personal. Again, the Prado hardly represents this artist, and he must be studied at Seville.

Francisco Ribalta, the imitator of Caravaggio and Schidone is claimed as the master of Ribera; and with Jusepe Ribera we come in touch with the first born Spaniard whose work is not merely

of local interest, but deserves a greater measure of study and praise than is accorded to him.

This great artist and admirable craftsman shares with the Italian Caravaggio, whose tradition he emulates, a curious measure of neglect in a time like ours, when the past is ransacked for study and praise.

An austere and at times noble realism characterises the painting of Ribera; allowance being made for those more casual or occasional works in which he is dominated by the model, and in which his realism is not noble, his sound method and technical accomplishment alone remaining for praise.

I have used the words 'noble realism' intentionally, because the term is not exaggerated when applied to Ribera at his best. More accuracy is needed; his lapses into the ugly never touch the common and trifling frame of mind we find in the Dutch school. Ribera at his best is a great artist, gifted with a grave sense of things, if rarely fine or penetrating in his sense of emotion.

It is difficult to explain that, notwithstanding many lapses in taste and sensibility, this artist is not vulgar; the present writer remembers such trivial touches as dirty finger-nails and feet, yet they were natural to the subject itself; these details were done naïvely and seriously. Ribera's

picture the ' Pied de Botte ' in the Louvre is finely painted and felt; it is immeasurably superior to the grinning beggars of Murillo, both in the visual qualities the picture displays and in its technical terms. This picture of a deformed boy is comparable to Velasquez's marvellously characterised dwarfs. One has but to remember the pot-house scenes of Teniers and Ostade, or the false rustic pictures of Morland, to realise that Ribera's ' Pied de Botte ' is a noble realistic work; that its grotesque quality belongs to that higher level which yields us a beggar designed by Raphael, or a fawn painted by Jordaens. In a sense it is a classical work, like the marvellous seated statue of Posidonius, or the Marsyas hanging to a tree, or those extraordinarily conceived figurettes of comic actors found in Greek graves. Then there are works that need no such defence from modern English prejudices and preconceptions, works marked even by noble feeling; for the designer of the bent head of St. John and the praying Virgin in the National Gallery ' Entombment ' is emotionally on a level with his power of designing and painting.

A curious ' striated ' impasto in the flesh, which follows the direction and locates the insertion of the muscles, will interest painters and students — a method adopted by Zurbaran also; for Ribera

in his emphatic sense of the plastic at times almost models in his paint. His white draperies are built in large touches that give body to the folds. Though he can render and design a sky with the decision of a Veronese, the nimbleness of the air is less fortunately conveyed; his work in his three different phases is too static in effect and aim; he relies too much upon the use of models. One understands his influence upon such modern painters as Courbet in his dark manner, an influence he shares, with his imitator or emulator, Zurbaran, an artist of a more sensitive fibre, but of less technical power, less personality and less force.

Ribera is the first Spaniard who can claim technically a comparison with the foremost artists of his century. In spite of the somewhat static qualities of his drawing and painting and over-insistence upon relief, he is surpassed only by the greatest painters; it might even be said that this heaviness of handling reflected something heavy, literal, and even a little cruel in his nature, which had caught colour from his time and his environment. The qualities of his colour, or the phase of his art which is most coloured, is also somewhat heavy and staid. His colour does not flash and glimmer like the air itself, or pulse below the texture of his paint as it does with the



RIBERA. — THE MARTYRDOM OF ST BARTHOLOMEW

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great colourists; it has a steady and somewhat oppressive glow, as of some heavy perfume; it has the tenacity and uniformity of rich and harmoniously contrasted dyes. But the more sensuous appeal of art was foreign to a nature which was tinged by the Spanish gloom; on the whole one may even be astonished that with the blackness of his shadows, the plastic over-emphasis of his scheme of relief, his pictures should be so rich and so satisfying.

Some obscurity surrounds the place of his birth, though there is little doubt that he was of Spanish origin as well as Spanish in temperament. The legendary poverty of his youth may have fostered his tendency to the sombre, to an ostentatious insistence upon life as it is, or as it appeared to him. His artistic career was directed mainly or fixed by the study of the art of Caravaggio, whose tendencies to extravagance and over-emphasis, not to say brutality, he modifies. He speaks the language of Caravaggio more freshly and with greater sincerity.

Ribera's large and imposing picture 'The Martyrdom of St. Bartholomew,' in the Prado, is an important and fine work, one of his finest, in fact. The black shadows and rich browns are contrasted with the ivory quality of the whites, the pale delicate quality of the blues. 'A Mag-

dalen in Prayer' shows great beauty of type; and legend associates this picture with his daughter, whom it is supposed to represent. His 'Prometheus' and 'Ixion,' painted for Philip IV., show him at his strongest in drawing and painting, but also at his worst as a colourist. These two pictures hang high in the Prado, in the large room given over to his work, which remains fine in its average, but monotonous in aim.

Francisco Zurbaran (1598–1662) has been called the most Spanish of painters; and no exact estimate of his genuine if unequal powers can really be formed outside his native country, or, more properly, outside Seville.

The spirit in which he painted was more devout, more impassioned, than was that of Ribera; he is more Spanish and less Italian, less secular, and perhaps less consciously an artist.

He was the friend of the Church, of whose servants he has left (doing duty as saints) strongly individualised portraits. If we conceive him born in another period, in another centre, one more humane and more cultured — say during the heyday of the Renaissance — we can imagine his developing into a grave, stately, and somewhat sober artist of the stamp of Savoldo, or Moretto of Brescia, who remind one at times of Spanish painting. Placed as he was in Spain, and in the

seventeenth century, Zurbaran's gravity and simplicity of statement become hard and strange. Upon him lies the heavy weight of the dark manner of the Italian eclectics and of a sombre wave of religious thought.

Modern criticism has assigned to Zurbaran the 'Adoration of the Shepherds' in the National Gallery, though it is leavened with some of the sanity of Velasquez, whose early manner it resembles greatly. More in his own spirit, more outwardly like, more obviously executed with his touch that clings to the direction of the forms themselves, is the 'Dead Knight' in the National Gallery, still attributed to Velasquez. At no time in his life, however, did Velasquez so paint the ground or so colour it; even under the influence of Ribera and Guido, Velasquez viewed his scheme of touches differently. I feel no hesitation, therefore, in attributing this work to Zurbaran.

With Zurbaran we often reach the acme of that cell-like gloom through which the art of Velasquez has to struggle towards the light.

His art leaves a double impression. In the religious or ascetic vein he is intense and personal, in more secular work he is at times a solid painter with an ordinary vision. As in most Spaniards, in fact, there is in him a downrightness of state-

ment which delights the modern realist; which touches also the man tired of the 'voluptuous intellectuality' of the greater painters and the nobler schools of Italy, and who turns to this phase of painting fatigued by the 'too greatly excellent.' We realise how little equipped he is outside his proper province in his foolish series, 'The Labours of Hercules,' in the Prado.

With Zurbaran dies out the last phase of asceticism which the shadow of the Escorial had cast upon Spain, and which makes one muse, when thinking of Spanish painting, upon the livid light of phosphorescence, — or the reflected light from some 'act of faith,' — or that cold twilight of the cell which has often been the light affected by Spanish painters.

This may sound an exaggeration of the mental stamp of the Spanish school, for Spanish art of the seventeenth century does not hold a hint of intellectual greatness. The sense of terror, the fine brutality of a Signorelli, for instance, is beyond its compass, — let alone the passionate awe of a Michael Angelo. To the present writer, the gloom, the earnestness, and even the cruelty latent in Spanish art, always suggest something common in the grain of the Spanish painters themselves; as if priest and painter alike had been, as they probably were, peasants, or men with

the brutal tenacity of peasants. It is for this reason perhaps that one values the more nervous art of El Greco so highly; it is for this reason that one must always except the marvellous art of Velasquez when summarising the Spanish school; though at its roots his art touches the Spanish manner prevalent in his time, and a certain native element recurs in his more academic works.

In face of some pictures of Zurbaran, or the extravagancies of the elder Herrera, one is seized with some impatience, one cannot see any reason for so much emphasis; the technical terms are insufficient to persuade. The Spanish painters are too monotonously grave, too monotonously literal in their outlook upon nature.

If we cast our eyes back upon the rendering of religious fervour as we find it in Giotto, in the Sienese masters, in Angelico, or in Botticelli, we face a different and an exquisite range of emotions. Many of the fervent and ascetic persons in Spanish pictures might be idiots or maniacs; often they are merely brutal peasants saying their prayers. This criticism is undoubtedly harsh; but not unfair in the main, though it is unjust to some specimens of the art of Zurbaran. This artist in his work sometimes resembles Velasquez; — not Velasquez in the bulk of his pictures, but Velasquez as he was in the first

rather prosy stammerings of his art. The art of Velasquez has cast a spell backwards, as it were; it is owing to him that we wish to know more about the early Spanish school; then, as I have stated before, the romantic wave of thought in France has interested itself in the sombre and sober Spanish pictures, endowing much that is dull with a reflected glamour. In a gallery of seventeenth-century pictures of different schools a Spanish picture produces the contrast of a man in mourning amid a carnival crowd.

CHAPTER III

THE SPANISH SCHOOL: THE CHARACTERS OF VELASQUEZ AND MURILLO

THE marvellous art of Velasquez is one of balance, moderation, and control. Few artists of his rank have contented themselves with a field so restricted, or have concealed with greater tact the effort or ease with which their work was done; few have a faculty that charms so readily, or rather, few have so enduring a charm.

An old-world school of criticism would praise his ever-prevailing naturalness; a newer fashion in criticism would praise his consummate art. Both criticisms are right, for amongst painters his style has the stamp of good manners: so difficult is it to say where a great naturalness ceases and gives place to perfect self-control.

So reticent and so tranquil is his appeal to the spectator, that in the more florid and emphatic phases of taste in painting that were prevalent in the eighteenth century and during the early half of the nineteenth century Velasquez was overlooked or partly forgotten.

It would be more just to say that, hidden in the royal palaces of Spain, his work was lost sight of. The place he now occupies amongst painters of the first rank dates mainly from 1850.

With Rembrandt, since his death, the process of consecration has been gradual; but Velasquez had sunk to the rank of a local celebrity. Sixty years ago no one would have dreamt of ranking him with Van Dyck, and he was esteemed immeasurably below Murillo.

So great has been the reaction, that it is not uncommon to hear him given the first place amongst painters — a claim which need not be discussed seriously. It is made mainly by people who are ignorant of the world's masterpieces, or who think they detect in the reticent canvases of Velasquez their own limited aims. Such men merely say, 'Velasquez is a great artist because he is like myself and my friends.' Velasquez did not even invent the terms he uses in painting, he has merely recast them to suit his purposes. He is in no sense a creative artist, his very powers of vision achieve their result by something he withholds, by an outlook upon life which was partial and limited.

A passionate student of the work of others, a constant student of the resources and limitations of his craft, the greatest quality of Velasquez is

not a profound sense of beauty, but a profound sense of style. He has no new or passionate message for the world; he is great largely by the things he does not say. His supreme quality is tact — he satisfies, he never cloys.

It might be said that, if from the fervour that was in Titian's art that of Rubens was evolved, Velasquez was the inheritor of some of Titian's dignity.

A few occasional Italians, a Tintoretto or two, were the hints in painting upon which Rembrandt founded a new method, a new vision in art; Velasquez, with the treasures of Italian painting before him, chose a tranquil course of observation and selection. He cut himself adrift from the Spanish fashion in painting, and reconstructed from that which he found, an art that is delicate and dignified. His sense of caution and his moderation are at the opposite pole to the native exuberance and creative faculty of Rubens, to whom all impulses and influences were welcome, to be absorbed and re-cast in the fire of his temperament.

Titian, Rubens, Rembrandt have seen and held a world within the confines of their genius — to mention those artists alone whose triumphs belong to the maturity of oil-painting. Velasquez moved in the rooms of a palace, his perfect

breeding made him touch whatever came under his notice with perfect confidence, ease, and success. It even made him handle with less success subjects he had not seen and for which a more creative temperament was required. This quality of taste — a quality certainly not the least in art — is as constant with Velasquez as is the lack of it with the rest of the Spanish school.

Velasquez is perfect as a portrait painter; and had he not painted 'The Lances' and 'The Spinners' one might have said he was perfect only in the painting of portraits, or in works which, like 'Las Meninas,' belong to the world of portraiture. As a painter his qualities are so great that we forget that others have made out of the pigment itself an emotional, a creative, 'an intellectual thing.' In fact, the criticism of Velasquez by J. F. Millet is apt and direct. He said: he is 'un peintre de race,' — a 'born painter' as we should say in England.

Compared with the perfect portraits which Titian has left us, compared with the portraits by Dürer, by Holbein, by Raphael, by Rembrandt, what should be our estimate of the portraits by Velasquez? The question is difficult; and we shall often arrive at the particular excellence of Velasquez by saying he is not this or



VELASQUEZ. — THE LANCES (THE SURRENDER OF BREDA)

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that — at this point Titian is supreme — at that Rembrandt stands alone.

The above list of portrait painters is incomplete. To it should be added the names of Leonardo and Giorgione. The great primitives have also left portraits in tempera in which a whole art or epoch is summarised, as in the 'Cardinal Scarampi' of Mantegna, or the 'Portrait of a Lady' in the Poldo Pezzoli Collection, attributed to Piero della Francesca. What is Velasquez's achievement as a portrait painter compared to Titian's? The answer is somewhat doubtful, for the humanity Velasquez painted had not the nobility or the intellectual variety that it fell to the lot of Titian to represent. Velasquez's gift of characterisation is more obvious and less profound; his people are living, and like, but there the matter ends; there is nothing showing the insight displayed in 'L'homme au gant,' the standing and the equestrian portraits of Charles v., or the 'Aretino' by Titian — to name the most celebrated, if not in each case the most subtle, of Titian's portraits. Technically also the Spanish painter's method, if more sprightly, is less original: in taste he is sometimes the equal of Titian.

How does Velasquez stand by Rembrandt when his works are compared to 'The Rabbi,'

and the old man with clasped hands in the National Gallery, and 'The Woman at the Window' at Windsor — to mention only a few pictures in England? Rembrandt's vision is more searching, his insight into character is more profound, his sense of plastic effect more thorough.

I have it at the tip of my pen to say that Velasquez is the most literal of the great masters; only this would in the main be unjust to Velasquez with his delicate insight, his power to show by the turn of a head, the bearing of a hand or glove, what are the habits of life of the sitter he portrays. His persons interest us as we might be interested in some chance meeting with a passer-by whose face and body had been moulded by his occupations. At times they are anæmic and uninteresting people, and that is all; at other times they seem a little shallow, like 'Pimentel'; at times they startle one by the vitality they display, as, for instance, the 'Pope Innocent' in the Borghese Gallery, the 'Sebastián de Morra' at the Prado, and the marvellous 'Lady with the Fan' at Hertford House.

One returns to the trite statement that Velasquez was less lucky than Titian in the humanity he had to paint; that Titian had for sitters Charles v. and Aretino, while Velasquez painted only the phlegmatic *viveur* Philip iv., and the



VELASQUEZ — SEBASTIÁN DE MORRA

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charlatan Olivares. Yet Titian can interest us beyond measure in people we know nothing about, people who were commonplace enough, like the 'Man in Black' in the Louvre, or the 'Alessandro' at Hampton Court; and we remember these works also as artistic creations. We do not remember the cleverly controlled contours, the refreshing passages of brilliantly brushed scarves and ruffs with which Velasquez enlivens his canvas. The pictorial mechanism behind Titian's painting is more subtle, more reticent; that of Velasquez more entertaining.

How does Velasquez stand comparison with Holbein, as we find him in the 'Erasmus' in the Louvre, the portrait of his wife at Basle, the subtle and marvellous 'Christina' lent to the National Gallery by the Duke of Norfolk? Holbein's aim seems literal enough, yet his grip upon character is more tenacious; nowhere in the work of Velasquez can we watch the current of delicate thought which we note in some masterpieces of Holbein — the 'Erasmus,' for instance. Velasquez surpasses Holbein in the charm of his handling; yet Holbein's slower method is within its limits no less beautiful, and more inimitable.

Velasquez never indicated character and vitality more surely and by more simple means than does

Raphael in the 'Mass of Bolsena,' or in the portrait of Baldassare Castiglione. How is it that Velasquez holds so high a rank as an artist, that his charm is so constant? I think the answer lies in the fact that in a subtle blend of forces, none of them quite supreme or unsurpassed, he is able to conceal the effort of fusion, to hold a middle course without conveying a latent sense of mediocrity.

As a painter of women he has produced two masterpieces, 'The Lady in Black' in Berlin, 'The Lady with the Fan' in London — pictures that Titian as a painter of women is unable to approach. Neither expressing the noblest temperaments only, nor delineating in the human face only the stronger and baser passions of the human soul, he finds a middle course full of a delicate gravity. This makes him the supreme painter of children. The still half-flower-like texture of their skin and hair, their flower-like eyes, their gravity when left to themselves — all this has been caught and rendered in a way that no other artist has been able to rival. We have nothing to do with the mother's darling type, but we have instead an extraordinary insight into the tremulous consciousness of early childhood. Compared with Velasquez's portraits of children the famous children of Reynolds are

too arch, too blooming; the children of Gainsborough too sentimental and appealing. Velasquez had at his command a rare power of reticence, far greater than his actual accomplishment — an accomplishment surpassed by lesser men even. The illusions of light and air are conveyed without over-insistence or for their own sake only; the quality of his paint is fluent and crisp, in delightful relation to the grain of his canvas. His figures fill their allotted place so simply and forcefully that we forget the art of composition. He conceals his marvellous sense of pattern; and like a critic of the old-fashioned school, we may say of Velasquez, 'he is better than Art, he is Nature itself.'

This venerable exclamation holds, however, a great portion of the truth about Velasquez: we have in him an extraordinary instance of the power of concealing art, to use another old and well-worn expression. This power of concealment does not lie in his case in a fascinating accomplishment or facility of hand; his pictures are full of corrections, revision, and amendment; his control of that which he aimed at was characteristic of a mind that was singularly consistent in aim. From his earliest and most painstaking works, which are dull in tone and heavy in handling, to his last and most brilliant achieve-

ments, we note the effort towards perfection and conciseness, the sacrifice of whatever is digressive or superfluous. His handling — now of an aerial delicacy, now solid and plastic — follows closely upon his vision; an ever-searching brush chastens or corrects or amplifies the contour; he repeatedly paints out with bold broken touches the delicate accessory which has become too noticeable. I know of one other artist only who so corrects and overhauls his work from end to end, tending more and more towards the perfection of the whole, and he is Titian.

With Titian the very texture of a picture holds its different superimposed strata of paint, or, as it were, the different skins under which the colour seems to circulate or throb as it does in human flesh. The grape-like bloom of Titian's pictures is the result of constant revision, effort, and sacrifice; in his later works the more broken touch ceases to mould plastically, and by a tangle of touches and tones he builds up the vision of his work in an atmosphere of its own. With Velasquez, the conscious and tactful student of Titian, the aim throughout his career is more and more towards the revision and re-handling of form and tone; till the painstaking and heavy still-life painter that he was at first becomes one of the most subtle of conscious painters. It

might be asked, Is not this conscious supervision of a picture's surface, throughout the history of art, the very essence of fine painting, the aim of all artists? In different degrees it has been so, but difference of subject-matter and of method will introduce other elements that dictate their own laws. Rembrandt, haunted by the vision of his own magical and transitory effects and by his dramatic aims, dominated his materials, plastered his paint, and improvised in his creative effort; the result is totally different. His vision is more intense, less subservient to fact; a greater man at all points, he has the violence of greatness; he has really, if not literally, thrown his brush at the canvas and thereby produced the effect desired — an effect for the nonce not to be repeated even by the master himself, or only to be repeated differently. In the more calculated and even cautious art of Velasquez, a result once obtained is his for the next picture; such a discovery in glazing or impasto will be again at command; and throughout the three phases of his art one can almost (with a few puzzling exceptions) tell which canvases were on hand at the same time.

Velasquez is the profound student who makes no parade of his knowledge, the profound observer, for whom observation, mere curiosity, is

not an end in itself. As a Spaniard, he is to some extent lacking in imagination, though not in sensibility; but he is never merely literal, trifling, or realistic. His native artistic gifts, at the first neither ample nor original, were husbanded till they yielded one of the finest and most delicate examples of what painting can do to interpret and transmute what in another man's work would have been mere representation. Though he rarely went beyond what was within easy reach, the representation of a person or of a set of facts that could even be made stationary in his studio, these conditions themselves, which in a weaker artist would have led only to a form of still-life painting, produce the illusion that this is the end of art itself. We forget that the subject to hand is often without its logical environment, against a background of black or grey, entirely arbitrary, in fact; that the pattern of his portraits is too often the same, and has descended to him from Moro, or through Moro from Titian, who was its creator. We forget that in the realms of imagination or fancy he can fall even below the standard of mere illustration, as in his 'Joseph's Coat,' the 'Forge of Vulcan,' the 'Mars.' We forget that he was neither in line nor in colour a creative painter, as Rubens or Rembrandt are creative painters,



VELASQUEZ. — THE FORGE OF VULCAN

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both in form and substance; we yield to the freshness and delicacy of his vision, the grave and subtle charm of his personality.

His effort expresses neither the joy and the ample resources of life itself, as with Rubens; nor its tragedy and comedy, as with Rembrandt; nor its spiritual aspirations, as with Michael Angelo: he barely goes beyond what might be brought into a cool grey room; he has shown the delicacy, the nobility even, that lies in common things, — the beauty of shadows, the transfiguring charm of a ray of light. By the carriage of a head, the poise of a hand, he startles us into delighted attention. He painted everyday people, — tranquil, well-bred people. We do not feel, as with Rembrandt, that they are poised at some climax of their lives or thought; or, as with Titian, that his sitters are princes in very deed, in thought, or by the trace upon them of things suffered and done. The proud, sensitive, and perhaps often commonplace people whom Velasquez had to paint stand merely recorded in a delicate pattern woven by the painter; we like the pictures for their mere paint, we also like them for the sake of the man who painted them, as he reveals himself in his self-appointed task, showing the beauty of order applied to the vision of things. His work is excellent good company,

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not for its racy record of facts and events, but for its tranquil charm; for the dashing Velasquez, the painter with a brush like a rapier, is a modern invention, — the self-reflecting compliment of several bad modern painters, paid to the most refined among artists.

How is it that Velasquez, situated as he was, in Spain, not in itself supremely gifted in things artistic; born on the threshold of the seventeenth century, when the greater forces in art did not tend towards reticence but rather towards a 'middle-aged' assertion of force and experience, — how is it that Velasquez stands above his nation and his time? Two answers will suggest themselves. If we accept the theory that art is always the expression of an epoch, and that the artist first absorbs those tendencies which he afterwards seems to create, — a theory which is too ready-made and too convenient, — we must agree that Velasquez is really an expression of his nation and period; that in him only do we find expressed that which was before wide-spread but inarticulate. This is not the case. Velasquez appeared, and employed a few assistants who learned his method; but the next artistic manifestation and influence was that of Murillo, a man at the opposite pole to Velasquez.

The contemporaries of Velasquez may have

found in the bulk of his work something that seemed of their epoch, but Spanish art learned nothing from him. We have one or two vague echoes in Mazo and Carreño; but the artistic expression with which the nation contented itself followed the bad Italians, such as Ricci and Giordano. Personally I think one reason can be given that will account to some extent for this evidence of selection and study in the art of Velasquez, which differentiates him from other Spaniards. Velasquez did not belong to the artisan class from which so many artists have been recruited; he did not early in life find patrons in the Church, — also mainly recruited from the artisan and peasant class. Of good family, a certain measure of material good luck attended him from the first. From the first he was taken up by Olivares and the Court, both patrons of the arts. He found himself, at a time when most artists are battling for the mere possibilities of study and existence, secure from anxiety, well regarded, and with ready access to one of the finest collections ever formed of the works towards which he felt most inclined.

Even under the same circumstances, I do not think we should be given another Velasquez. Yet it is worth noting that in these circumstances there was nothing harmful; the human

and artistic plant was given air, congenial space, and nourishment; and a modern artist may look back rather wistfully at the fostering approval that surrounded the promising efforts of the courteous and self-reliant young Spaniard. Courteous and engaging he is known to have been; self-reliant he must have been, since at a period when he felt he had so much to learn from the past and the treasures of Italy, he remained outwardly undisturbed by the advent of no less a person than Rubens himself. Rubens came, saw, praised Velasquez for his modesty, doubtless spoke of Titian, Correggio, and Italy; and went away. Rubens came, but his faculties were not absorbed in the business, political and otherwise, that had brought him to Spain. He was large in his vitality and in his power of communicating it to others, boundless in his powers of study and work; and Velasquez may have watched him paint, for the fun of it, the marvellous 'Adam and Eve,' still hanging in the Prado near the original by Titian, of which it is so dazzling an interpretation. This, and other copies, must have been painted in the very palace to which Velasquez had daily access. Though the 'Baltasar Carlos' belonging to the English crown may show that Velasquez once remembered Rubens, even in this case the present writer is rather

repeating a generally accepted statement than uttering his own conviction.[1]

So far we have had to deal with the peculiar essence in the work of Velasquez which distinguishes him from his countrymen and from the great painters of all time; we have striven to show that while Spanish art had been derivative and not too well-balanced in the past, the art of Velasquez conceals its indebtedness to others under a seriousness and reticence which is quite his own; that his gifts are clearness, delicacy of vision, and balance of temper. His perfect temper is the artistic equivalent of good-breeding. Viewed from the most exigent standpoint, not merely is his work refined, but he carried his refinement lightly like a glove. His sense of good-breeding possesses that Latin element of simplicity and gravity which makes other forms of refinement seem mere ceremony and fashion. In his artistic message there is not a word too many or too few; he has the gift of persuasion owing to his obvious naturalness and frankness. Whether he describes a dwarf or a princess, we accept what he has to say without hesitation. The distinctive quality of his art might be described as tact, but a form of tact that presupposes

[1] The picture was painted some years later, when the painter's individuality was fully developed.

the excellent, and makes no compromise with expediency. It is in this that he is so opposite to Murillo, whose art is full of quite natural and facile concessions to vulgarity and sentimentality, concessions that are instinctive in his case and done without effort, almost innocently. With Velasquez Spanish art ceases to be local, provincial, conspicuous mainly for a somewhat arbitrary frame of thought. Ribera before him doubtless belonged to the great European family of painters, but his qualities are not genial or various enough, though at certain points he is excellent. Upon Ribera and upon El Greco (whom I have treated as a Spaniard) rests the evidence of the reaction from the Renaissance; Spaniards by birth or affinity, they have voluntarily shut themselves out of the open air, away from that which is lovable or gracious: and with the death of Velasquez Spanish painting sinks back to a lower level.

Murillo's art reveals the temper of the Catholic seventeenth century; of Catholicism tempered. become amiable, the associate of courts. Murillo's painting is like the architecture affected by the Jesuits; agreeable, operatic, and trivial, on a level with the artistic taste of the greater number at the time when women begin to share in culture and to influence politics.

Enter a church in Italy marvellous with some

masterpiece of the Renaissance; note the paper flowers; note the large wax doll dressed in satin, decked with sham jewels and pathetic ex-votos, the centre to which is directed the worship of the poor, of women and children. An analogous position in the history of painting is occupied by the art of Murillo.

Gifted, facile, not lacking in technical capacity, possessing a method of his own, and even certain predilections in the choice of the elements of which his pictures are formed; — intellectually he is on a level with the starved and the inattentive.

I do not think this attitude cost him the slightest effort: he was sincerely religious, and that he took a certain pleasure in his facility is probable. Yet what is the result? The appearance only of pictures; beyond the outer facility, nothing, not a type, not an accented fact; an art always in the clouds. Beyond the facile smile, the amiable gesture, we touch an art which with all its incorrectness is academic in its nature, and all formed on one pattern. Each great epoch has had some painter who, under a disguise of temperamental facility and spontaneity, has been really academic. In the fifteenth century there was Perugino. On a higher level of effort and originality, as became a nobler centre, — Florence of the sixteenth

century — we have Andrea del Sarto. In Spain in the seventeenth century, under a new disguise and with new local limitations, we have Murillo.

On first contact with this painter's work, as it is seen gathered together in a large room in the Prado, one is seized with the wish to qualify this habitual estimate, to admit that it is in part unjust; yet, after we have noted that Murillo at least satisfied himself, — that he was accomplished, — that certain pictures rise above the general run of his work, — we find nothing deserving real admiration.

The 'Charity of St. Elizabeth of Hungary,' once in the Academy of St. Ferdinand, now occupies a central place in a large room given up to Murillo. For once the expression of the saint is grave, if her type is unintellectual; but note how every other figure (with the exception of the vulgar beggar boy scratching his head and winking at the spectator) is a mere dummy in character, pose, and drawing. The painting, within its limitations tranquil and even solid (for Murillo), accents nothing, recalls nothing. Yet this picture is famous, and among his work it is deservedly so.

We have noted how Velasquez, though technically supreme, remains a student, haunted



MURILLO. — THE CHARITY OF ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY

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always by some further perfection. In Murillo there is no such effort, no such ideal; once found, his method remained ever the same. From first to last it is all temperament and convention. Fortunately his work is not discordant or crude; so far he is not provincial, as was Roelas or Herrera.

Many painters of the eighteenth century have studied Murillo; Fragonard had his Murillo manner; and he influenced Greuze and Gainsborough. I have heard Murillo praised for his *naïveté:* not often has a French word been so misapplied, even by Germans. Murillo's pictures show a certain facility; he is ample and easy, vague and vulgar. Not a type is accented, nor is there in his pictures a beautiful or a sinewy line; not a space of fascinating colour, though one cannot deny a clever and effective massing of lights and darks. The 'Dream of the Knight Maxentius' and the 'Foundation of the Church of Santa Maria del Popolo' (once in the Academy of St. Ferdinand), are works which have an appearance of being more sustained, and which show greater warmth in workmanship; still here, as elsewhere, all is vapid and lacking in variety; the figures sleep or move without convincing the spectator for whom they pose. These pictures are effective in a way, yet in them Murillo says

nothing that appeals to the imagination, nor is the technique interesting.

In a picture by a great master there are mere accessories which are delightful in themselves; and if we turn to a scholastic and uninteresting picture by Velasquez, 'The Forge of Vulcan,' we fall under the spell of something in its technique or detail — the painting of a shoulder or an arm delights us; we follow the sinuosity of a contour, we are pleased with the mere grain of the paint: yet Velasquez in this picture is hardly himself, but reminds one of the cold and unsympathetic work of Guido. We shall find no such pleasure about the surfaces of Murillo's pictures; as with Andrea del Sarto, all is facile, demonstrative, done for show, full of generalized accessories; though figures and draperies remain ample, and in a sense rich in effect. Murillo's work is personal, but the quality of his personality is not valuable. He enlivens his pictures by recollections of the model usually chosen for a certain amiability of type. The work of Sarto and Murillo is graced by appealing smiles to the public, and arch looks directed out of the frame.

This comparison between Sarto and Murillo is in a sense unjust to Sarto, whose drawing was sound, — almost noble, if not expressive, — and whose academic sense broke down at times under



MURILLO. — REBECCA AT THE WELL

the influence of some lucky pictorial invention, such as we find in the noble and amply designed women in 'The Birth of the Virgin,' or in the man who turns to the servant in the upper part of the St. Salvi fresco. Yet the difference between the works of Sarto and those of Murillo is not a difference in essence: it is due to the different stages of their artistic development. Murillo, too, had fewer chances of inspiration to hand; he was born not in Florence but in Spain.

Bartolomé Esteban Murillo was born in 1617 and died in 1682. The pupil of an obscure painter, Juan de Castillo, his earliest manner is merely a local amendment of the Italianising art then practised throughout Spain, and resembles the little-known work of Pedro de Moya.

One of the later works in the 'cold' manner of this painter is the popular 'Rebecca at the Well' in the Prado. His early work is often without accent or force, I had almost said without sincerity; yet this is not true, and perhaps the art-lover will be surprised to find that some stray work marked by a closer reference to nature belongs to the later part of his earliest phase; in which he is less accomplished, and more uncertain — but also without that vacant facility which he attained later and for which he has obtained so much praise. A curious use of

colour in his landscapes and in some accessories will at times hold the spectator; a suggestion of latent rain or storm in the dark sky, in the whitish storm-lit ground, with touches of dark cool green in the vegetation; this he learned from Pedro de Moya.

To his second and third manner belong the pictures in the warm style, and those in the vaporous style, by which he is best known. To Murillo's middle manner belongs the large picture in the National Gallery. In his last phase of all the tone becomes artificial, giving a smoky effect to his pictures; in which his accomplishment remains, however, always remarkably equal.

The lack of all intellectual effort seems to have aided the facilities of his brush. He is singularly equal in this matter throughout his life, and few painters can be so thoroughly appraised upon a single work. The impression in the Prado remains for that reason perplexing and indefinite. In the bulk he appears a capable artist, yet the pictures which at first sight seemed deserving of attention recede from one on further acquaintance. Each is equally good; all, or almost all, are equally dull. An effort of memory focusses their merits more distinctly than is possible in actual contact with them. We remember the importance and accomplishment of the 'St.



MURILLO. — ST. JOHN

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Elizabeth of Hungary' in the Prado, or the 'Birth of the Virgin' in the Louvre — and perhaps Murillo's best claim to fame rests on this picture, with its agreeable vein of playful invention, and the sort of feminine charm which pervades it. The charming sketch in the National Gallery conveys all this, though this dainty work need not be discussed as an original. Murillo's sketches are different in tone and pigment, and this is obviously, from the touch and the paint, a spirited French copy.

Murillo is at his best in subjects that are playful or slight, or which have been made so by the facility of his temper, such as the little 'St. John' here reproduced. The 'Martyrdom of St. Andrew' in the Prado is a work of great facility of touch; the eye is entertained by a more engaging and spontaneous use of the brush, yet the triviality in the treatment of the subject, its cheap sentiment and over-facile brush-work, place it on a lower level.

What should be our estimate of Murillo? how should we account for the praise Velasquez gave to this artist when still a young man? How is it that, anxious to praise, we find praise difficult? that we look at his pictures with attention but with distrust?

Murillo's actual native gift was very great

indeed. In another period, one marked by a greater intensity and naturalness of approach in art matters, and by greater intellectual effort, he would have been influenced by that effort, and have produced works which, like certain pictures by Fra Bartolommeo and Sarto, are secure in the admiration of the world. Give Murillo his facility and self-assurance, place him under different circumstances, and I think he would have ranked with these Italians.

This mere facility and native gift is sufficient to account for Velasquez's praise, tempered, as it was, with the advice, 'Go to Italy to study the work of the great Italians,' which we can freely translate into, 'Go to see how great are the real responsibilities of great art: learn to feel and paint on a different level of effort, do not merely make the best of the wretched local work on which you have formed yourself; whatever may be your temper or your aim, benefit by the experience of others, and do not fail through ignorance and facile self-sufficiency.' Something like this would have been in the mind of Velasquez, who himself had found so much to study; who, like Raphael or Rubens, was one of the greatest students in the difficult art of painting. This advice was not taken by Murillo: he returned to Seville, where he painted rapidly

and ably to the last, to the last self-satisfied. And a great merit in his work is possibly due to this very self-satisfaction, which has given an extraordinary unity to his pictures seen as a whole: and if we content ourselves with the limitations of aim and realisation which were his, we can follow the tourist, the guide-book, and the attendant in the picture-gallery, and admire Murillo; we shall even find cultured Germans of the company who will praise him for fancy and ideality, whereas the former quality was singularly limited and the latter totally absent. His qualities were in their essence realistic and trivial; it is his triviality and sentimentality which has shipwrecked his natural tendency towards realism.

Occasionally in his portraits we catch hints of what he might have done; these are more serious and grave in tendency than one might have expected; but unfortunately, with this very reticence, his technical skill forsakes him, and again we find ourselves unwilling to condemn, yet unable to admire.

We can estimate the successful quantity in Ribera's work quite easily, whether he fails in inspiration, in effort, or (what is more rare) in his forcible and monotonous technique; we have no doubt as to the quality of seriousness which

characterises his work. With Murillo the case is different; he is not a mere distressing eclectic, equally facile and equally vapid in whatever manner he may employ, such as Valdes Leal, Claudio Coello, and other Spaniards marked in the catalogue as 'del Buen Tiempo;' his personal quantity is very definite. The sources of his inspiration may be found latent in certain phases of de Moya; his debt to Baroccio is very great, yet he is certainly original. On a higher plane he is like Greuze, a perfectly conscious, self-satisfied and accomplished artist; yet I know of no single point in his work in which he is truly great or even remarkable; not even in his technical skill, in spite of a singular unity in workmanship and effect.

It has been the fashion for some time to seek in the work of Velasquez for the work of his assistants; and till the authenticity of a masterpiece by the great Spaniard has been proved, not always by any very exact or intelligent standard, it is the fashion to murmur the name of Mazo — whose technical habits, judged by his authenticated pictures in the Prado, are dull, painstaking, and slow in brush-work, and therefore unlike the work of Velasquez. Velasquez's constant research in technical matters is to some extent accountable for this false impression. An

inexact estimate of Velasquez formed on the specimens in the Louvre is also to be taken into account; for of the pictures there, one alone, the exquisite 'Infanta Margarita,' is genuine. It is thus that, ignoring Velasquez's great variety, a work of unusual aspect is liable to be attributed by critics to Mazo, whatever may be its actual beauty and force.

Mazo, who became Velasquez's son-in-law, reveals himself in his signed and authentic works at the Prado as a sober if somewhat dull painter, whose imitation of the master belongs to the later middle of Velasquez's career. Mazo's early landscapes are founded on Italian models. They break very gradually into greater freedom in the 'Fountain of the Tritons' (certainly not by Velasquez, whose workmanship it in no way resembles). Mazo's large 'View of Saragossa' shows a conscious and prosy effort towards the palette used by Velasquez. Figures and distance are now generally admitted to be by one hand, and that Mazo's; the former are sharp in colour and small in workmanship, the whole is painstaking and crude. The cold crimsons, greens, and blues we find in the 'Lances' are here repeated in a dry and emphatic way, without a sense of unity or grouping in colour or design. The portrait of the Princess in black, once assigned

to Velasquez, is signed 'Mazo.' The portrait of Baltasar Carlos in black with his hand upon a chair, though probably a copy of a lost original by Velasquez, is painted by Mazo.[1] To this painter also belongs the 'Philip and Mariana at Prayer,' still *skied*, in which we note the more broken touch affected by Velasquez at the time when Philip and his second wife had reached their apparent age in these works. Yet compared with Velasquez (with whose work these canvases should not readily be confused), we find in Mazo a literal and painstaking workman with tendencies to paint into a dark ground, and thereafter an attempt to acquire those loose and spangle-like touches we note in Velasquez's later work — small vivid patches pressed into the surface of the pigment to enliven it, but in Velasquez's case the pigment is more luminous. Velasquez's last method is executed also on a light ground, with less body in the substance of the paint than with Mazo, striving to imitate him.

From the pictures by Mazo which I have instanced, it is no jump to the 'Philip in Armour,' No. 1077 in the Prado, with its agreeable if spongy workmanship, still attributed to Velasquez. The pigment here, as in all Mazo's mature work, would in studio slang be called 'muzzy,'

[1] Copies of these two works are in the National Gallery basement.

though it is well matched and even varied in the different parts of the picture. Judged by the standard set by Velasquez, however, Mazo in this work lacks technical sequence and control; he lacks 'style,' though he remains tactful and entertaining.

Mazo's more spongy method of painting characterises the flesh in the two heads of the La Caze collection. I think that his touch is noticeable in the curtains and flesh of some replicas of Velasquez's portraits, though the master would seem to have transformed such works by sharper and more continuous touches in the painting of the dresses and accessories.

This technical digression may seem vague and confusing to some, yet to a student it may convey the state of the case. To put it in a few words, Mazo's workmanship is less constructive, less resourceful, less varied and nervous than that of his master. This is natural; but recent critics have had a tendency to consider a work of art too good for the master, and have therefore placed it to the account of the pupil or pupils. With the exception of the 'View of Saragossa,' Mazo's paintings are harmonious in colour, but vague in drawing, notably in the delineation of features.

There is some futility at the root of the study

of minor men as it is now understood; the creative impulse behind fine work is discounted, and we exaggerate the languid habits of imitators and copyists into a claim upon our attention.

I fear even less luck will attend our study of Pareja, Velasquez's other pupil, — the interesting Moor who, as is well known, ground colours by day and secretly taught himself to paint by night. We all know the agreeable legend, the gracious gift of his liberty by Velasquez; the interest of the king and court also; the nine days' wonder when the servant, probably at the kindly suggestion of the master himself, was declared to be an accomplished confrère. The story has all the pleasant elements of such a family scene. The interest of the king is also full of a perennial charm; how many royalties have patronised the new local genius, village poet or craftsman, doomed to be in no other way conspicuous!

Pareja looks out at us from the sketch by Velasquez belonging to Lord Carlisle; and in the same aspect but with a whiter complexion he also looks out at the spectator from his feeble and laboured picture, 'The Calling of Matthew,' now in the Prado. We look in vain for the mark of a native gift, a racy if superficial sense of fact, which might, as it so often does, count at first as the evidence of an anticipated talent. In

Pareja's picture all is dull, laboured, flat and commonplace; unpleasant in colour, lifeless in design and drawing; the sole human interest being the European complexion bestowed on the author himself, to whom I think the original portrait by Velasquez mentioned above has sometimes been tentatively ascribed.

Carreño was an unequal, eclectic, but more interesting imitator of Velasquez than Mazo or Pareja. He combined some influence of Velasquez with more understanding of the method of Van Dyck. As a painter, he often falters and falls into a timid and vapid imitation of both masters; but at other times he is capable of really good if not original work. The well-designed portrait of Charles II. shows the blending of the two styles, but without sufficient accent or gusto in the workmanship. An admirable portrait of a nobleman, standing by a white horse caparisoned in blue, is a really remarkable imitation of the style of Van Dyck. This picture is brilliantly painted, notably in the face and sky; but in the accessories — horse, page, etc. — the artist's hand falters and his taste is less sure, the result being vague and timid. This picture, once in the Escorial, now hangs without number or name in a dark side gallery of the Prado. Carreño's female dwarf enjoys some reputation

among artists; it shows spirit and decision. Other works of lesser merit hang in poor places in the gallery. An admirable Infanta dressed in green velvet, No. 609 at Vienna, is there attributed to Velasquez.

Carreño doubtless possessed more artistic taste and judgment than conviction or force; he repeats the lesson of Velasquez with a less perfect accent than Mazo; yet I think he was probably more moved by the personality of the great master. One turns from the laboured, unequal but always well-intentioned and well-planned works of Carreño with a sense that a little more luck, a little more conviction, might have made an artist of him.

In the trail of the Bourbons came the invasion of that academic art of the eighteenth century which has now been lost sight of, and the student of painting finds nothing to record. A weary trace of this period survives in the portraits of Raphael Mengs, who had the conscience but not the gift of an artist. Mengs and Bayeu — I mention the German and the Spaniard because they count in the life of Goya, because Goya's aim was ostensibly to continue those glaring smooth portraits and tedious decorations by these seniors of his.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPANISH SCHOOL AND THE ART OF GOYA

With Goya we find ourselves once more face to face with a new force in art. In temper, in the range of invention, he is a personality no student can overlook. His work deserves our closest attention. As an influence in art his position is so considerable that this alone should entitle him to the reputation his work now enjoys. After the neglect and the hesitation of the art world for about a century, Goya as an original and potent fact 'has come to stay.'

We have complained of the lack of originality or power to convince in the bulk of Spanish painting. No one could make this complaint about Goya, in whom we find no lack of self-assurance and audacity: and if at times he holds one less than at others, it would seem as if the painter for the moment had refused to take the trouble to exert himself to obtain our suffrage, being sure of compelling our attention later on by some work of daring originality. Like his

work, his personality was sardonic and original, his life one of daring and adventure. We have noted how the life of Murillo passed without event, was that of a pious provincial artist well paid and praised: how the simple, ordered, and courtly life of Velasquez was devoted solely to the perfection of his work, interrupted only by the fulfilment of his duties as court painter and chamberlain. With Goya the vicissitudes of an agitated life account for the inequalities of his art.

Goya, like Ribera, was born of the people, and like Ribera a certain rebelliousness and bitterness of temper marked him; as if in his blood lay a longing for revenge on the very patrician caste which employed him.

His rebelliousness and bitterness are not like the theatrical attitude of a Salvatore Rosa or a Caravaggio. His art is at once conscious and analytic, more direct and more profound than theirs; it is arrogant and daring, as Mirabeau was; it shows the vindictiveness of an old civilisation turning upon itself.

Goya's temper and art belong to the active ferment which resulted in the French Revolution; the destructive sense, and the sense of impatience and revenge underlying it; — not the sentimental view of life and man formed by Jean-Jacques

Rousseau, which also fed the desire for a change.

Goya's temper is sardonic and critical, not constructive; it shows the intense egotism of most romantic art, the wish to be 'in the thick of it.' It is however more observant, more various, less essentially artistic also, than the romantic movement; his work is less essentially art than an intense form of excitement. It is arrogantly personal, or even whimsical, contemptuous of selection or deficient in the power of selecting. The very force and variety of his gifts blind one to the anarchistic element that swayed him. The elements contained in his work would count for harm if the limitations of his art and temper did not discount him as an artist, and we can say 'You are too personal, too singular, too local.'

Goya y Lucientes was born at Fuendetodos in 1746; he died in 1828 at Bordeaux. The pupil of an obscure painter, Lusan, the greater chances afforded by a capital soon led him to Madrid, which he is said to have left under some apprehension of the Inquisition. We next find him in Rome, where he met David, the secessionist from the crude painting of the eighteenth century as we find it in Boucher. David was harsh in temper, a cold and emphatic realist, the painter of loud and literal portraits, the founder never-

theless of the heavy, emphatic, but not ignoble classical school of painting in France, with its use of over-developed models in tin helmets, gesticulating before porticoes of that classical style of architecture one meets with in railway stations and police stations. David as an artist had the mind of a policeman; his art regulation destroyed the eighteenth-century tradition in France and with it the pleasure in painting. He raised prohibitive barriers before the masterpieces of the past, he ruled the art world of Europe for twenty years as a dictator. His prejudices survive this day, in an enfeebled form, in the academic training of art students.

Goya was also out of love with the eighteenth century, but he was destined to be the first of the moderns, to found a tradition of observation and analysis in art that is alive even now. Unlike David, he benefits in his work by the traces of the old traditions and practice he wished to destroy. With a trace in his method of the free and racy handling of the past, some study also of the art of Velasquez, for which he had a boundless admiration, Goya has influenced the painters' reaction against the academic tradition of David.

We find in the impressionist Manet, the descendant in France of the Goya tradition of fresh, emphatic, and spontaneous painting, the opposite

to Gerome — shall we say the last descendant of the school of David? Or we might put it thus — Goya shares with the Englishman Constable the credit of the reaction in modern art against a huge theory of compromise in the making of pictures, known as the academic theory; according to which all is controlled by arbitrary laws of balance and concession, by measurement with actual small and static facts, a mechanical scale of form known as proportion, a mechanical scale of values known as tone, and a mechanical scale of design known as composition.

Goya's return to Spain is marked by a small set of pictures of bull-fights, which are so personal, so curiously his own in temper and composition, that one might well have imagined them to have been done later. His return to Spain had been hastened (so it is said) by some scandal in Rome, it is said the abduction of a nun from a convent — concerning which ecclesiastical authority was about to take action. The Spanish Ambassador at Rome intervened, however, in Goya's favour; and the year 1775 saw him settled in Madrid.

The collection in the Prado now contains the designs for tapestry formerly in the Academy of St. Ferdinand and in the Osuna collection. These painted cartoons were commissioned by Mengs, and the tapestries themselves are housed

mainly in the Escorial. I do not think that the more permanent qualities in Goya's work are revealed in this series of designs: which enjoy, nevertheless, a certain reputation mainly for their popular subjects, perhaps also owing to the heavy bright colour which characterises the set. The success of this effort of his was immediate; and from that time we find Goya the familiar of the court, married to the daughter of the official painter Bayeu, yet not fettered by his marriage to a life free from scandal and adventure.

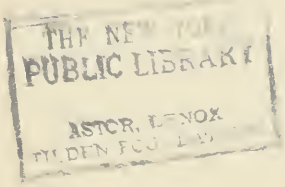
If Goya became the painter of the court, and of Spanish society, he was beloved also by the people for his prowess with the rapier and as a bull-fighter.

The life of Goya was spent in a fever of work and garish living in the midst of a conservative court, and under the shadow of the Inquisition itself.

These pictures and portraits of contemporary life appear under every possible aspect in workmanship and design; it was Gautier who said of Goya that he at times ' paints with the delicacy of that delicious Gainsborough, at other times he has the solid touch of Rembrandt.' This statement has the picturesque force of all that writer's opinions, and it well describes the various



GOYA. — THE FAMILY OF CHARLES V


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aspects of Goya's work; but the conscious and exquisite use of their medium by the grand Dutch master and the dainty English painter was never aimed at by Goya. The truth is, these pictures and portraits are often astonishing in vitality, and equal as mere painting to the task in hand; but more often still they are perfunctory alike in character and workmanship; at times even they are unmistakably cynical, the painter's record of a tiresome task, the conventional rendering of an odious sitter.

The Prado now contains the admirable portrait of the Queen in a mantilla, formerly in the Escorial: as a pendant hangs the picture of the King in uniform, painted, one might well think, before the artist had benefited by the King's large tolerance and intelligent forbearance, so unsparing is it in characterisation.

Near these pictures hang the two famous equestrian portraits of the King and Queen. I think few pictures by Goya justify his reputation as a painter more thoroughly than these two works.

Less balanced but equally vivacious is the large group of the royal family, — thrown together, haphazard as it were, upon a large and luminous background, in the shadow of which we see the painter absorbed before the fore-

shortened edge of the canvas he is supposed to be painting. Here all the individuals stand before you with their character expressed, vivacious, or sensual, or futile, or engaging, as the case may be. Even more agreeable and vivid are the three or four heads painted in preparation for this work and lightly rubbed in upon a red ground, also preserved in the Prado. In these portraits comparison with Gainsborough is far from being hurtful to the Spaniard, so unusually light and expressive is his brush-work.

As a painter Goya rarely equals these vivid pictures and sketches, and he is rarely so self-controlled, varied, or forceful. However these daring portraits of royalties may affect us now, they satisfied the court. Goya's popularity did not wane even in the excitement of the scandals to which we owe some of his most sprightly canvases.

The Duchess of Alba became attracted by the daring wit and personality of the painter; this ended in her banishment from the court, and into exile with her went Goya. To stop the scandal of the adventure the duchess was recalled by Maria Luisa.

Such is the story; and the Prado now contains two sensational pictures of the vivacious duchess. Time has brought its faculties of pardon or

forbearance; and in a small room of the Prado devoted to masterpieces we now find the two portraits in the company of the rarest and most precious canvases. Here Rubens has painted Marie de Medicis with an opulent and creamy touch, and the colours of pearl and opal upon the luminous face and hands; here Titian gives us all the gravity and fineness of his workmanship in his portrait of Philip II.; next to him is a vivid and nervous picture of a young nobleman, ascetic and refined, by El Greco. Beyond we find the steadiness, the simplicity and taste of Velasquez exemplified in no less a work than the portrait of Montañes; about the room hang the idylls of Correggio and Watteau. A picture by Giorgione breathes a delicate air, refined in mood, self-absorbed, and remote; and in this company we find Goya's two canvases, still vivacious and fresh. In one, 'La Maja,' a nude, he has painted the sinuous waist, the frail arms, the dainty head of the Duchess thrown upon pillows, contrasting in their grey whiteness with the gleam upon her flesh. In the other we note the same grace of pose, a more summary workmanship, touches of colour, — too many perhaps; the Duchess of Alba (La Maja dressed) reclines on her divan in the rich bolero and white duck trousers of a toreador or Spanish dandy.

We pause, we are astonished and charmed, we wonder how such a thing was possible.

Her beauty and daring live in the two canvases; this one scandal in the nineteenth century has endowed the world with these pictures, and they are now in the Prado; so ends the adventure.

These two paintings were to fascinate Manet; in the famous 'Olympia' of the Frenchman we find his recollection of these works. But Manet, with all his slightness of aim as of a brilliant and intelligent amateur, is more consciously a painter, more regardful of his material, if less profoundly and copiously an artist, than Goya.

The art-lover will constantly find in the paintings of the Spaniard food for astonishment and study; yet only in his prints does Goya really aim at a perfect or balanced effect in art. It is here that he elaborates his 'convention,' that he is supremely and adequately himself. The studies in sanguine for some of his bull-fighting scenes, his 'Caprichos' and 'Disasters of War,' hang in the Prado. They show to what point Goya is one of the world's artists. It is by his power of design — an original, varied, and nervous form of design — that he excels even more than by his vivacity of workmanship and his marvellous if unequal gift of expression. This gives him a position no art-lover can overlook.

Goya's etchings are vivid comments upon life and passing events, and form his testament to the world. The 'Disasters of War' show the artist as a commentator upon the Napoleonic campaign in Spain, in which war for the last time in history seems to have shown its old character of cruelty and brutality over and above its actual horror; and all this is shown by Goya without a didactic touch or trace of false sentiment or false emphasis.

Grim and tragic, Goya's 'Disasters of War' have a telling force which ranks them amongst the prints of the world with the greatest series — 'The Little Passion,' 'The Dance of Death.' They have a narrative force equal in their way to that of Rembrandt, if in subject they are more emphatic, in mood more monotonous, in workmanship less searching or varied.

But the subtleties, the refinements, the self-restraint of the greatest art necessitate qualities that were foreign to Goya's temperament. He is at the opposite pole to a Titian or a Velasquez. His medium never had the fascination for him which it had for Rembrandt. In him the sense of curiosity is in excess of the sense of beauty, and the love of experiment is in excess of the love of art. This characteristic is harmful to his painting, and he has no sense of the scale upon

which his work should be done. A large picture at Madrid — 'The Massacre of the Prado' — has scarcely in it the stuff for a vignette. Some of his bull-ring lithographs and etchings have in them, on the other hand, the material for vast canvases. The portrait of the painter Bayeu, or that of the doctor Valjean, now in the National Gallery, shows subtlety in painting and characterisation alike. Other portraits in the Prado seem to have been painted in a 'fever of indifference' to form, colour, or characterisation.

I have called his art romantic; yet it was not romantic as was that of the painters we call romantic, — Delacroix, for instance — or like the art of the more suave and intimate phases of the movement shown by Rossetti and Gustave Moreau. Each of these men, whether visionary or dramatic, is haunted by the regret for splendid things; each is touched with an intellectual nostalgia; each is above all an artist. The tragedies of Delacroix develop on the steps or pavements of palaces and towns of an epical or heroic world, in a world of passion and regret. Rossetti saw life through the window of some palace of art looking out upon the past. All these artists are haunted by the beauty of faded things.

Goya, dramatic, reactionary, and even visionary

as he is, found his material at hand; he is aggressively actual and seems to intend to give you nothing but facts. His position is singular, — more allied to that of the still little known but extraordinary artist Daumier, the painter of sketches, and improvisations upon the lithographic stone, than to that of any other artist of the Romantic movement in which we find, as it has wittily been put, 'the regret of the world for the Revolution.' In Goya there is no regret, he is the Revolution itself; his art shows resentment against conventionality, a certain haste, above all, a nervous egotism. It is perhaps better not even to strive to class him in the movement, but apart from it: he is at any rate the sworn enemy of conformity, and conformity is the bane of the classical mood in art and thought; — conformity, a fine use and wont, of which there is nothing in Goya.

Goya as an old man visited Paris, then in the throes of the battle between Romanticism and Classicism; he did not meet Delacroix, but he was favourably impressed by what he saw there of the younger school. The fall of the Napoleonic dynasty and the return of the Bourbons to Spain affected the end of Goya's life. With the pardonable elasticity in political things we sometimes find in artists, Goya had been outwardly recon-

ciled to the change in government, though from pictures and etchings we divine that at heart the change had been bitter enough to him, a Spaniard. When the new king, whom Goya had painted in the past as Prince of the Asturias, returned, he forgave the old artist his disloyalty:— a disloyalty in which too many had participated without the adequate excuse of the craftsman who had to live by his work, and the portraits of Ferdinand VII. now hang in the Prado, daring and buoyant in workmanship if lacking in subtlety and taste.

Goya had now become, or at least felt he had become, a survivor of the past; a new generation had come, the old one had gone; and he became a voluntary exile from Spain, which he has done more than any man to illustrate.

Goya's art has the power to appeal strongly and to repel with equal force. Delacroix, Baudelaire, Courbet, Manet — each has fallen under his spell. In England he is still hardly known. Each of these names represents a different cast of mind; sprightly in Manet, bourgeois in Courbet, synthetic in Delacroix, analytic in Baudelaire. Baudelaire, 'the poet of the bitter heart,' stands for Goya's conquest of a refined and subtle mind; his praise of Goya is different in reach and insight from the more picturesque and emphatic praise

of Gautier. It is perhaps truer symbolically than actually that Mr. Ruskin once destroyed a copy of the 'Caprichos.' The estimate of Goya in the official catalogue of the National Gallery is perhaps a more trustworthy means of valuing his hold upon England. Here we note that tendency amongst Englishmen to see superficiality in work marked by a brooding inner sense of things; just as the last generation read the more painful or cynical books of Zola and De Maupassant for amusement.

Whatever may be our estimate of Goya's success, his sincerity and energy place him amongst the forces with which one must count: and no estimate of Spanish art can be made which does not include him.

CHAPTER V

VELASQUEZ

VELASQUEZ was born at Seville in the year 1599. He died in 1660. His name is the crowning one in the history of Spanish painting, and in the history of Seville, which has been the art-centre of Spain; the one place in the Peninsula in which art has been practised and encouraged for several generations, the prosperity and patriotism of the town having found expression in an ardent encouragement thereof. The fever for building which we note in the fifteenth century, and to which we owe the Cathedral, was followed in the seventeenth by a large patronage of painting; and some Spanish masters are still to be found at their best in the churches of Seville, for instance Roelas, Zurbaran, and Murillo; and under the 'School of Seville' we also find classed such names as Juan Sanchez de Castro, Francisco Pacheco, Francisco Herrera, and Valdes Leal.

It may be idle speculation to draw a parallel between Seville and other trading centres in

touch with the sea, which have been favourable to the arts, such as Venice and Antwerp; yet we find that the bustle and life of towns near the coast or along great river-courses has often been beneficial to the encouragement of the arts, and, given Spain as a centre, Seville was the town best suited in circumstances and temper to foster or welcome the efforts of a young artist. It had in the past not only given birth to some of the painters instanced above, but had absorbed the work of others, such as Pedro Berruguete and Pedro Campaña; and in the lifetime of Velasquez himself it possessed the best works of Zurbaran.

To this day Seville is brisk and bright. The walls of its huge, florid cathedral top the picturesque traces of the old Moorish town. It has its gypsy quarter, in which Velasquez may have found his first models, as Murillo did later. Seville stands among Spanish towns for whatever is southern and florid in Spanish life; it is the town of Murillo, whilst Toledo, scattered on its heights, is at once grave and fantastic, the fit setting for the wild, passionate paintings of El Greco. Velasquez was therefore fortunate in his birthplace, as he was also in the easy circumstances surrounding his youth, but there the value of his environment ceases. His art is not essentially

Sevillian and local, though in its commencement it shows traces of its Spanish origin; '*his* pencil speaks the tongue of every land,' to paraphrase the hackneyed sentence of Dryden. His art is not merely Spanish, it is European; it is not Sevillian, demonstrative, or florid like that of Roelas, Herrera, or Murillo, but has a sweetness, gravity, and distinction which is all his own.

The art of Velasquez is even Northern in its homeliness, if it is Latin in its sanity and self-control. Had Velasquez been the supreme expression in the art of France, for instance, we should not have been surprised. Had he been born in the seventeenth century in Italy even, we might have accepted his advent as logical, allowance being made for his unique temperament. There are few art-centres where we might expect him less than in the half-oriental Seville.

It is only in his sense of reality and in his sense of gravity that Velasquez is Southern and Latin, or that he forms part of the Spanish tradition in painting. We shall find that his early environment counts for nothing in his temper; his early training for rather more, if mainly as an influence to be overcome gradually: that he benefited by his early environment in so far that it was not hostile to art, no one can doubt. He was also fortunate in at least one of his masters, Pacheco,

from whom he may have learned to consider the importance and dignity of art, and the necessity of study in painting, — great virtues in themselves which are not conspicuous in the other influences with which he may have come into contact early in life, such as the wild eccentric art of El Greco, in which we see the 'pathological debasement' of a fine mind and fine talent, or the emphatic, preposterous, and, let us say at once, idiotic art of Herrera, in whom so many have detected the leaven of the early and somewhat prosaic art of the young Velasquez.

The fact is that Seville 'the Golden' was a centre of wealth, culture, and pleasure 'in the garden of Spain;' that during two centuries of prosperity the town had included a love of art in its pleasant scheme of life; in no Spanish centre during the fifteenth century had the art of Flanders been more welcome, and it absorbed with equal readiness the later Italian fashion. In the opinion of Pacheco, the father-in-law of Velasquez himself, and one of the lights of Seville, the friend of the cultured persons of the town, the taste of the time leant entirely towards Italy, and the imitation of things Italian. Here are his words: 'All the great men produced by Spain in sculpture and painting, Berruguete, Becerra, Machuca, the Mute, Master Campaña, Vergas (pride of our city),

after passing the best of their life in incredible efforts in Italy, striving with more than human spirit to leave behind an eternal memorial of themselves, chose out the path pointed out by Michael Angelo and Raphael and their school.' But this tendency is not present in the work of Velasquez at first, and later it was from other Italian sources that he drew the material he put to such splendid use.

If it is at Seville that we note in Roelas and Herrera the first stammerings of Spanish art, the signs of national feeling for the first time, their influence counts for nothing in the formation of Velsaquez. The art of Seville is emphatic and florid with Roelas, and it is sensational with Herrera; while Velasquez is the supreme master of moderation. Before dismissing these early home influences, which may have counted as a stimulus, but not as an example, it may be better to analyse them more thoroughly.

Velasquez as a child and as a youth may have noticed the gilded decorations of the early Flemings, then utterly out of favour, and the derelict Italians. There was in the cathedral the fine, the almost grand, 'Trinity' of El Greco, which later in life Velasquez would certainly have admired. Roelas in Seville had displayed intermittent flashes of originality, such as we find in

the 'Martyrdom of St. Andrew;' and Herrera, the fellow-pupil of Pacheco under Roelas, had won that name for himself in which we recognise more the self-invented legend of the charlatan and artistic adventurer, crossed with the ruffian, than the evidence of passionate research and effort of the original artist or pioneer. Herrera became for a short time the master of Velasquez, but where in any early work of Velasquez do we find a trace of the emphatic platitudes of Herrera, — 'the Michael Angelo of Seville'? — or of his brush-work, which reminds one of macaroni in tomato sauce? The early works of Velasquez are cautious, solid, or rather stolid, in aim and workmanship; they face facts seriously; there is no wish to walk on the clouds, whilst in Herrera's work all is calculated (like his nickname) to attract and hold men little conversant with the passionate seriousness of the greatest art. The forming influence upon Velasquez at first was nothing but a close study of nature suggested by his second master Pacheco, and coloured by some of the prosaic tendencies of that master, who with all his stylistic sympathies and pomposity of character was a shrewd critic and a student, a dull if a rather underrated painter after all. The art of Velasquez was formed first under the teaching of Pacheco, and then stimulated by the

solid, realistic art of Ribera. We can dismiss altogether the legend of Herrera's influence upon him; and with more reluctance that of El Greco, and the agreeable legend that the half-mythical Luis Tristan forms the link between El Greco and Velasquez.

It has been the fashion to underrate the influence of Pacheco on Velasquez. It is to him that we owe (with not a little admixture of self-congratulation on his part) most that we know of Velasquez's early career; and just as all critics are delighted when they can prove Vasari to have been wrong, so most writers upon Velasquez have sought to under-estimate the testimony and example of Pacheco. They have, therefore, imagined the influence of Herrera and Luis Tristan — names that sound well, since their work is generally unknown. Such early dull works of Velasquez as the 'Christ in the House of Martha and Mary' in the National Gallery, and the 'Young Men at Meat' (now at Apsley House), owe their heavy tone, their static forms, to Pacheco mainly. Perhaps the legend of Herrera's influence may be traced not only to the wish to discount Pacheco, but to differ from Professor Justi, to whom all students of Spanish art owe the little that is known of it, and who has disposed of the Herrera legend, giving the only

possible verdict on this tedious painter of preposterous pictures.

The parents of Velasquez belonged to the 'hidalgo' or 'gentle' class, with descent on both sides from good or noble families. His father, Juan de Silva, was the descendant of an old Portuguese family. His mother, Geronima Velasquez, was the daughter of a Sevillian nobleman. The young Diego dropped the name of his father, de Silva, for the probable advantages that belonged to the Spanish name and family of his mother, and Diego de Silva has become famous as Velasquez.

His parents, though gentlefolk, were not opposed to their son's early vocation; perhaps we have here the principal advantage of a centre in which the arts were favourably viewed and practised, and Velasquez's main debt to Seville and its culture. Possibly, however, their placing the young Diego as a pupil under the half-mad Herrera was meant as a test of his vocation and perseverance, for Herrera's violence and eccentricity had estranged even his own children.

We can accept Professor Justi's surmise that Velasquez was Herrera's pupil for a few months, perhaps even for a year. His second master was Pacheco, whose house was a meeting-place of the more cultured Sevillians, in whose company he prided himself. Pacheco was eclectic as an

artist; as a man, a strange mixture of shrewdness and pedantry. He had returned — not from Italy, the Mecca of his thoughts — but from Madrid, where he had seen some of the works of the great Italians. At Toledo he had visited El Greco. Velasquez became the favourite pupil of his master, whom he won by his earnestness and natural charm of manner. 'Confident in the young painter's future,' Pacheco gave him his own daughter in marriage in 1618, when Velsaquez was nineteen. The first dated work of the young Spaniard is the 'Epiphany' in the Prado, dated 1619; with this we can class the famous and more masterly 'Aguador' at Apsley House, in which we recognise two models, the boy and the water-carrier, who figure in the 'Epiphany' as a king and an attendant. Both these early pictures are cautious in design (not to say timid in the case of the 'Epiphany'); but they are carefully and solidly painted, dark in tone, broad in drawing, and in the case of the Bodegone picture, so certain and self-possessed in execution that one wonders at the possibility of any development and change.

A small portrait head of a man (1103), in the Prado, with its simple hard scheme of light and shade, brown flesh, and cold white ruff, belongs to this period also; and with it we may class

the ' Woman Cooking Eggs ' in the possession of Sir Francis Cook at Richmond.

Modern criticism has removed the National Gallery ' Epiphany ' from the work of Velasquez and assigned it to Zurbaran. ' The Toper ' in the Cook Collection has been attributed to some Dutch painter with a marked outer Spanish aspect, to whom we owe the fine ' Christ Disputing with the Doctors ' (305) at the Pinakothek in Munich. We have but this small number of works so far mentioned to carry us up to the date of 1622, when Velasquez, on the advice of his friends, travelled to Madrid, where he painted the poet Luis de Gongora, a picture which is still unidentified. Great changes came over the court with the sudden death of Philip III.; and Olivares, the all-powerful minister of the new King Philip IV., soon took interest in the young painter, who was advised to return once more to Madrid by his friend, Fonseca, in 1623. A portrait of his patron Fonseca was his card of introduction to the court itself. The King, his brother, the entire court, examined the picture; not only was Velasquez promised the patronage of the King and his brother, but King Charles I., then Prince of Wales, and suitor for the hand of the Spanish King's sister, Maria, sat to Velasquez for the study

of a head of which all trace has unfortunately been lost.

Velasquez painted an equestrian portrait of Philip IV. which has also disappeared, together with the allegorical 'Expulsion of the Moors from Spain,' which has perished like other works in one of those fires which from time to time have visited the Spanish royal palaces.

The early manner of Velasquez remains even in the famuos 'Borrachos' heavy, staid, and cautious, notably in his subject pieces; there are still traces of his early training even in the conception of the 'Mars,' finished some twenty years later.

From the year 1623 till 1629, when he made his first visit to Italy, we find Velasquez at work on that wonderful series of calm full-length portraits in which the heavy technique of the 'Bodegones' or 'Kitchen-pieces,' and even the technique of the 'Borrachos,' gives way to a more tranquil scale of relief and a cooler key of tone, which may be noticed in such masterpieces as the Philip IV. by a table, in the Prado; the superb Olivares with a whip, at Dorchester House; the King's brother, Don Carlos, holding a glove, which now hangs in Madrid as a pendant to the early portrait of the King; the Queen Isabella in black, in the possession of E. Huth, Esq.;



VELASQUEZ. — THE "BORRACHOS"

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the Lady at Berlin; the portrait of the baby Baltasar Carlos with a page, in the possession of Lord Carlisle; and the 'Pablillos de Valladolid' at the Prado. This series carries us, it is true, beyond the first visit to Italy, which took place in 1629; but the pictures mentioned form a sequence. To the years 1630–1633 belong the 'Joseph's Coat' in the Escorial, the 'Christ at the Pillar' in the National Gallery, the 'Forge of Vulcan,' and the 'Christ Crucified.' This last I have dated on the evidence of its style, and not on any historical grounds concerning the convent in which it was placed, and for which it had been painted. In these last works Velasquez is perhaps less truly himself; they represent his challenge to the painting of his time which he had seen in Italy.

These early portraits are admirably spaced, and carefully painted in a cooler and more delicate key than that of his early 'Epiphany' and the 'Bodegones.' We note that faculty for development which characterised Velasquez throughout his life. The scale of tones is low and sustained, but the brown heavy flesh of his early Sevillian manner is gone. He reveals that freshness and coolness of tone which we usually associate with his work — if in his subject pieces 'Los Borrachos' and the 'Joseph's Coat' there

is still a reminder of his former methods. But the portrait of the King's brother with the glove, the Lady at Berlin, and the Pablillos are masterpieces of painting; in temper and quality they can challenge comparison with his finest works; they even hold one by a certain austere charm which we shall find less noticeable in the pictures of his second period.

In Velasquez's early portraits the sitter is only partly abstracted from his usual environment; he stands at ease, yet attentive, in the vicinity of a cool grey wall, a curtain, or a table; upon this the painter throws a glove, a letter, the hat the sitter has removed but now; the velvet tablecloth we note in the 'Philip II.' of Titian figures in the 'Philip IV.' in the National Gallery. From Titian Velasquez has learned the cunning use of a piece of linen, the glimmer of a chain against the black vesture of his sitters. From Titian he has caught the secret of those subtle lights upon the blacks themselves, thin in the substance of the pigment, greenish in the lights, subtle in scale of tones and in grain. The supreme distinction of approach which the world has praised in Titian already belongs to Velasquez. Olivares may pose and strut as he will, the artist places the figure in a delicate pattern, focussing the light upon a hand, a temple, or a ruff.

We are conscious of infinite reserve, infinite refinement in the planning of these early works: take Philip's brother, for instance, as he advances towards us, his glove held lightly by a finger. We are conscious of a yet greater and more instinctive refinement in the passionate-looking woman who gazes at us from the canvas at Berlin; the movement of her hands fills us with pleasure and attention, we feel that we can think only of Titian at the same time with these portraits; the elegance of Van Dyck suggests the elegance of the fencer, even that of the dancing-master.

Rubens visited the Spanish court in 1628. His example, his actual advice, may have counted for much in enabling Velasquez to visit the Italy which he so longed to see. What would we not give for a record of what passed between the two painters? Pacheco writes with satisfaction that the great Antwerp master praised Velasquez and his art for modesty. In Rubens's own art and character lay all the accumulated treasure of the Italian Renaissance; the golden light, the passion, the delight, the pride in the creative sense and outlook, all were his; all except the more secret, the intenser scale of emotions which we find in the greatest Italians. The young painter was in his attitude and aim the first of the moderns, waiting more humbly

upon Nature, measuring her tones, analysing and selecting; his art is almost criticism, a noble criticism of what is to hand. Where the Renaissance had divined, remoulded, and created, Velasquez stood ready to measure and observe, not without emotion or power of selection; yet by the side of Rubens the creative draughtsman and creative colourist, he was but a student of art and nature, a recorder, a weaver, a man of unwearied watchfulness and tact.

Velasquez left for Italy shortly after the departure of Rubens, accompanying Spinola, whom he was to paint in the 'Lances.' He reached Genoa on the 20th of August. We find him later in Venice, then occupied in warlike preparations made in hostility to the Spanish policy in Italy.

This was hardly an auspicious moment for Velasquez or any Spaniard to visit Italy. Yet we find him, guarded by an escort, enriching his impressions of the Venetian school, copying the 'Last Supper' of Tintoretto, steadfast in his admiration of Titian, who (to use his phrase), amongst Italians, 'carries the banner,' or as we phrase it, 'bears the palm.'

After Venice we find him at Bologna; renouncing his proposed stay at Florence in his haste to reach Rome, then the Mecca of the art world. Despite the hostility to Spain then prevalent, he

was well received. Like his art, his person and manner must have impressed men with a sense of his distinction and earnestness. The young master was given a pass that enabled him to have ready access to the marvels of the Sistine and the Vatican. He was lodged for a time, at the request of the Count Monterey, in the Medici Villa, and settled for several months in Rome.

To his stay there, and probably to the influence of what he had seen in Rome (then the home of the eclectics), we owe the 'Joseph's Coat,' the 'Forge of Vulcan.' Tradition would ascribe to his first stay in Rome the two entrancing sketches of the Medici Gardens now in the Prado; and in these exquisite casual works we find an anticipation of the bright fresh brush-work which marks his canvases after his return.

The date of his famous 'Borrachos' has been fixed as immediately preceding his departure for Italy, by a payment (dated July 22, 1629) for a picture of Bacchus. There is, however, no evidence that it was not begun some time before that. In this, as in the 'Joseph's Coat,' we find still a trace of the heavy browns, black, and purples of his first manner, the figure of Isaac recalls by its pose the judge in Tintoretto's 'Miracle of St. Mark.' In the 'Vulcan's Forge,' in which he uses one of the models of the previous

picture, the composition is more formal, less spontaneous; parts, like the orange robe of the Apollo and the cold sky beyond (disfigured by a harsh modern addition), show a deliberate attempt to emulate the colour and pigment of Guido with his cool flesh and cold shadows. A trace of this is equally noticeable in the 'Christ at the Pillar,' though the latter is more original and more Spanish in temper.

It is so usual to underrate the 'Vulcan's Forge' that the present writer would point out that, within its cold and rather emphatic outer aspect, it contains marvellous and very personal passages of brush-work, an extraordinary power of control and a reticent use of 'shorthand' in the painting and drawing of parts, which we may search for in vain in the more smooth and mechanical painting of Guido. If in these pictures we find Velasquez handicapped by his wish to show that he also was an artist in the then accepted sense, the two sketches of the Medici Villa are truly painted for himself, for his own pleasure and our delight; the artist is here entirely himself. The general aspect of these two small landscapes has been described as a blending together of Constable and Corot, and this may pass; for the first time in painting we have the spangled effect, the shimmer of cold bright daylight upon leaves.



VELASQUEZ. — GARDEN OF THE MEDICI VILLA

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In Constable we find the effort at glitter and movement in excess of the sense of form. Corot is too feathery, too light; both are in a sense too regardless of the beauties of their medium, whether they are somewhat heavy and emphatic as the Englishman, or over soft, over facile as the Frenchman. The effect of the Spaniard's canvases is more staid, the mood behind them is more calm, more sure, less fussy. The motive in each is well defined; touch, colour, and mass are all beautifully contrasted, the spangles of pale yellow and white shimmer through the cold green of the foliage in the one, contrasting in their coldness and variety of tone with the delicate rose in the architecture and the light. The splashes of light upon the ground are a pale pink; the touch and pigment throughout is varied. The other sketch, with its colonnade of cypresses, is grey and tranquil; the sky is of pearl, and in part shows the dark grain of the canvas, as does also the architecture, with its subtle touches of rose and blue upon the white. The trees take variety of colour more by the quality of the liquid impasto than by any change of tone. Both sketches are singularly tranquil and balanced behind their aspect of spontaneity.

Velasquez here discards the red grounds on which we find him working even in the 'Christ

at the Pillar;' the touch, the introduction of certain colours, such as a purplish grey, and a cool dark green, recur, with the same use of a pale straw-yellow in the three royal pictures of the King, his brother, and the young Baltasar Carlos in hunting-dress. With these three last pictures we enter upon the second phase of the painter's career, though in the opinion of the writer the first itself may be subdivided into two: the Sevillian manner so called, culminating in the 'Borrachos,' which might have been painted as early as 1626; and the cool dark manner, commencing with the Philip IV. at the table and ending with the 'Pablillos' in the Prado.

The hunting portraits mentioned above and the equestrian groups are works belonging, by their colour, pigment, and design, to this phase, which culminates in the world-famous 'Surrender of Breda,' or the 'Lances.' Greater freshness in qualities of touch and greater sharpness in colour and transition of tone characterise this period in the master's work of which we shall find examples only in the Prado.

One might call these pictures decorative pictures: to be more accurate, they show an attempt at a more decorative outer aspect. They are in a sense like the portraits of Van Dyck, 'Portraits

de Parade.' The greater facility and assurance Velasquez displays in the hunting and equestrian portraits may be due to the stimulus left by the Italian journey, to closer contact with the telling canvases of Tintoretto as he has come down to us in the 'Miracle of St. Mark,' or Veronese as we find him in the daring sharp colour and fresh brush-work of the 'St. Cyprian and Page' (now in the Brera), with its cold greens, cold crimsons, purples, and light blues. More probably the change was mainly instinctive, due to the conditions necessitated by the works themselves.

For a time we no longer find Velasquez the staid and exquisite interpreter of his sitter, as he is in the Ferdinand with the glove and the Lady at Berlin. The action of his figures is more demonstrative and more generalised also; they form part of larger composition schemes marked by more telling contrasts. This is at any rate true of the equestrian portraits.

To the student of painting the three hunting portraits rank among the greatest treasures of the Prado. With these we may place the 'Philip IV.' of the National Gallery, and the wonderful portrait of the dwarf 'El Primo.' In the hunting-pieces the subject is still seen standing at ease, with the face turned towards the spectator, but the pose has lost somewhat of its earlier formality.

We find Velasquez even more preoccupied than before with the pattern of his masses, correcting the outlines and controlling the silhouettes. The painter's preoccupation with the contrasting of his pigment is also more marked; the red ground of his early manner has been discarded for a lighter one, inclining to a broken and pinkish tone which in part is no doubt the mere first rub on of the picture itself, and the tenderly modulated contrasts of his dark manner now give way to greater freshness of tone. The colour is perhaps a little cold, in the more elaborately and carefully painted portraits of the King, his brother, and the exquisite 'Baltasar Carlos' in hunting-dress; the pitch is higher, the flesh lighter, the quality of the lights more keen than hitherto. The grey skies are balanced in the design by the rich browns and brown-blacks of the clothes. Passages of sharp pale yellow and a sharp blue-green give accent to the horizon and the landscape. These three canvases and the equestrian portraits probably formed part of the furniture of the Buen Retiro, and may have been painted under circumstances, or to fulfil conditions, that precluded the more subtle colour we find in the later works of Velasquez. This remark applies mainly to the large equestrian portraits, which in their present over-cleaned and damaged state



VELASQUEZ. — BALTASAR CARLOS IN HUNTING-DRESS

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are brilliant in painting, superbly designed, but sharp, not to say harsh in colour.

The tone of the equestrian pictures of Olivares, Philip IV., and Baltasar Carlos may well have been lighter in pitch than was Velasquez's wont (I would not put the tone down only to the picture-cleaner), the pictures being destined for decorative purposes. Some effort in the finding of the silhouette and design seems to have characterised the workmanship of the portrait of Olivares. The sky shows patches of ill-matched paint (not modern), as if the painter had worked with less light and less space at his disposal. The modelling of the head is superb, that of the horse turned away from the spectator is a *tour de force*. The sapphire blue cloud of smoke cutting against the rich turquoise sky is a painter's invention, one of those finds we expect in a distance by Veronese. The portrait of the King is, however, a yet finer picture, more fortunate in design, more direct in workmanship; yet even here we note that Velasquez did not achieve at once the scheme of this telling design, for there are signs of drastic changes about the contour of the King and the horse.[1] The more famous portrait of Baltasar

[1] The two small pictures in the collection of St. Telmo, Seville, purporting to be sketches, are, judging from the photographs, like the two canvases at Hertford House, copies. They show the King and the Duke as pendant works, the tree to the left, and space in

Carlos on horseback is slighter in workmanship; it has unfortunately been so over-cleaned and scraped that it counts henceforth as a damaged picture. It is one of the ruins made by the restorer in commemoration of the Velasquez Jubilee.

It was at this period that Velasquez rehandled the equestrian pictures by Gonzales of Philip III. and his consort, and the equestrian portrait of the Queen Isabella in an embroidered dress, — in which last the sky, the landscape, and the horse are probably additions painted upon a picture which, if by Velasquez, belonged to his first period, before 1628, and not to this epoch of the equestrian, 'Olivares.' Some rehanging or re-arrangement of the pictures in the royal palaces probably led to this rehandling. It is to the decoration of the Buen Retiro that we owe also the painting of the 'Lances,' one of Velasquez's most important works, and one of the finest pictures in the world.

It seems hopeless to explain the science in

front of the horse being later additions, though recent cleaning has sadly impaired the unity between the pictures and these additions: that on the left-hand side, with the piece of paper at the foot of the trunk, like that in the corner of the 'Lances,' would seem to have been made on the initiative of the painter. The workmanship is fresh and the addition adds to the design; the piece on the other side is of more dubious value, and may be modern.

composition, the invention and resource which this picture reveals; in face of such a result, what does it matter if part of the effect is due to a consummate stage-craft in alternating reposeful or elaborated surfaces? Another painter might, for instance, use the large flat mass of the horse on the right, and contrast the broad painting of the Dutch Guards with their backs turned on the left, with the delicacy of the half distance: all this would not make the picture. Many elements of this design are contained in the canvas by José Leonardo which it was painted to supplant.

The beautiful motive of the upright lances, which has given the picture its name, has been the cause of some speculation among artists and critics. I think this grew out of the subject itself, quite naturally and instinctively, and is not due to any of the cases of precedent I have heard advanced; they cut across the design, connecting the sky and the crowd; they are used with the same tact for conveying a host that the painter has shown in the making of two armies with some eight figures, a horse, and fourteen heads.

So much has been said about the sentimental side of the 'Lances,' that again one is at a loss to explain the secret of its success. Velasquez travelled to Italy with Spinola in 1628. Spinola

may have described the event. This again would not account for the success of the work; similar advantages have befallen every painter of military subjects. The occasion itself is full of that implied self-control and conventionality of any official meeting; and yet instead of an official picture of parade, full of false sentiment and mock nobility to give it importance, we have the first, perhaps the only historical picture in the world; — for the one or two historical canvases one values also, such as Delacroix's 'Crusaders at Constantinople,' and the 'Battle of Taillebourg' are more in the nature of evocations of tragic or dramatic events; they are after all only a little more related to fact itself than the lost cartoons of Michael Angelo, and Leonardo, which represented the 'Florentines surprised whilst Bathing,' and the 'Fight for the Standard.'

The important fact remains that, under circumstances that required caution, tact, reticence, almost mediocrity, Velasquez has painted a picture which touches us greatly; and one feels that rarely has a theme been handled so surely yet so tenderly.

A singular sense of good breeding and taste characterises the posing of the principal figures. The victor and the vanquished bend towards each other; we hear in imagination the

muttered surrender, the more carefully worded and courteous reply. Spinola rests his hand on the shoulder of Justin of Nassau. A flag floats in the wind; beyond, some bandsman touches a flute; the light gleams on a detachment of Spaniards in bright holiday clothes; the eye wanders in the labyrinth of the background with its dykes and small patches of smoke; a face turns towards the light, and we notice it as we might in a crowd.

Such is the aspect of the 'Lances,' a picture whose delicate mechanism it is dangerous to dissect, and whose emotional quality is of as rare and delicate an order.

The critic can date it, the artist study its planes and surfaces, the restorer deprive it of its final glazes; yet it remains the best, perhaps the only, historical picture in the world. I have classed this work, together with the equestrian Olivares, Philip, and Baltasar Carlos, as pictures whose pitch, originally bright, has been further heightened in key by over-cleaning.

In the 'Lances' we find the use of unusual colours; definite, yet not of the nature of primaries; a purplish crimson, a hard bluish green, bright blue, fresh pink, a reddish brown — colours for which I have after all not been able to find recognisable names. Passages of the same kind

of colour figure in the hard blue-green petticoat of the principal woman in 'The Spinners,' in the blue draperies of the 'Venus' at Rokeby Park, and in the purples, crimsons, and grape blues of the 'Coronation of the Virgin.' It would seem as if Velasquez, at times one of the most subtle of colourists, dreaded an impression of monotony and over tranquillity; it is as if the painter had been conscious that his pictures tended to look more like a reflection in a mirror than to revive the aspect of realities which had taken so great a hold upon him.

The dwarf 'De Morra,' the 'Pulido Pareja' in the National Gallery, the sketches made in preparation for the 'Baltasar Carlos on Horseback in a Riding School' at Grosvenor House and Hertford House, the 'Hunting Scene' in the National Gallery (which in all particulars saving the sky and distance is by Velasquez), the superb portrait of the Pope, Innocent x., at Rome, the 'Lady with the Fan' and the superb sketch made in preparation for it — all these works point to a greater use of glaze, a more varied use of pigment, more richness and harmony than the group of pictures at Madrid I have been concerned with; and for the loss of this picture-cleaners are to blame.

The 'Spinners,' though over-cleaned, also shows



VELASQUEZ. — THE SPINNERS

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evidence of various methods of super-imposed glazes and paintings. From the painting of the 'Lances' to the painting of 'Las Meninas' (now sadly flayed) we find Velasquez a closer student of colour and pigment than ever, more varied in his touch, yet more occupied with the fascinating effects of air and distance, a closer student also of the variety in human flesh. A certain fulness of tone in this matter has at times perplexed critics before works of Velasquez's mature manner, the hack phrases 'the greys of Velasquez' and 'the silver of Velasquez' having affected their eyes through their ears.

Before concerning ourselves with Velasquez's second visit to Italy in 1649, we will consider the 'Spinners,' which is usually placed somewhat later, owing to his supposed constant visits to the royal tapestry depot, made in his capacity as Aposentador Mayor — an appointment which dates from 1652.

The evidence of the picture itself points to so much revision and rehandling that, like the earlier 'Borrachos,' it was probably on hand for several years, taken up and left according to the stress of circumstances and the mood of the painter.

Underlying the searching and synthetic qualities of the brush-work, and the design of the work it interprets, is the obvious evidence of consid-

erable revision, alteration, and repainting by the master. The experiments in lighting and composition are so novel for Velasquez, that we need not wonder that they were not 'knocked off' at a few sittings, like a portrait against a formal background. To the present writer this picture is almost a confession of the painter's attitude as an artist. It reveals his hold upon fact, his synthetic hold upon mass, his sensitiveness to the various aspects of light upon colours and planes, like no other picture of his, be it more forcible, as the 'Pope,' or more aerial, as the 'Anchorites.' The present writer feels that in the conception of the picture there is evidence of several moods: and the old woman at the wheel, the cat, the girl lifting the curtain, may have formed part of an earlier picture now underlying the present one; that by the addition of the less loaded canvas at the top above the glimpse, and the join in the canvas, and also at the side, a picture of spinners in a kitchen may have been turned into the half fantastic canvas that we now possess, with its radiant glimpse open to the light, and with its bold synthetic painting in part covering the heavily painted figures. These could not have been so imagined, so synthetised, or so sacrificed to the effect of the whole at the first; or why the loaded pigment,

the evidence of revision, and the rapid broad touches suggesting or effacing the realistic detail? These parts could only have been realised when once the picture had taken tangible form, and was in fact sufficiently developed for these refinements to supervene. They carry with them the conviction of some sacrifice to the massing of the picture as a whole, such as the most far-seeing of artists could not have anticipated.

This is possible, for Velasquez was not in temper or in art a spontaneous painter; and let it be said that those other men of facile execution and vision (like Frans Hals, for instance) are really 'improvisors' contenting themselves with what comes to hand. Their facility is of the wrist, not of the intellect: theirs is more a memory of the fingers than of the brain.

The present writer feels, therefore, the probability of more than one wave of thought in the 'Spinners,' which does not show the effective stage management of the 'Lances' nor the singleness of motive of 'Las Meninas.' The figures in the foreground and the radiant glimpse form part of a decorative scheme, it is true, though the dominant motive of the picture is less easy to define. In truth, we hardly know on what our interest is intended to rest.

The superbly painted woman with the skein

in the foreground leads the eye along the marvellously painted arm, to the small stage on which three ladies move in the shimmer of a mote-filled sunbeam, before two walls hung with tapestry.

Continuity of thought or motive is for a moment arrested; we are charmed by something digressive and strange, by unexpected discoveries by the way — the 'cello, for instance, left against a carved seat, the charming head of one of the dainty visitors turned sharply round towards the spectator. The main tapestry itself, forming part of the glimpse, was formerly a copy of Titian's 'Rape of Europa.' This has been turned into something else, and we note painted over it a helmeted man grouped with some lady, Dido or Cleopatra.

Recent cleaning has given a certain hardness to the green drapery of the foremost girl in the 'Spinners;' recent cleaning and some older restoration have partly deprived the red curtain of its harmony and grain; this is all criticism dare venture, and the lover of pictures may spend minutes or hours in a fascinated study of the work, follow the whirl of the spinning-wheel in the elusive and masterly touches by which it is conveyed, wonder at the beautiful pose of the arm and neck of the principal spinner, become absorbed by the light brooding on the folded

tapestries behind the bending girl near the curtain, or follow the reflected light up the ladder against the wall.

The room is full of implied light and the pulsing of it in the shadows themselves. Across the glimpse breaks a shaft of sunlight, blue at its birth, yellow at its contact with the wall, white a little lower down as it catches the floor.

To the lover of painting the glimpse itself is a revelation of delicate art; the touches patter upon a surface in spangles of jewel-like paint; here the brush-work pulses continuously, there it sweeps with the sudden movement of a dragon-fly across a space, leaving a trail of glittering colour to thread the neutrals of some spot in which the colour has hitherto brooded. In no picture, unless it is in that of Pope Innocent, or in the ' Margarita ' at Vienna, or the ' Anchorites,' do we note a more masterful control of his medium.

Before painting this work we have seen Velasquez more cautious or more self-assertive; later still we shall find him more self-absorbed or more experimental; but nowhere is he more inimitably himself, more secure in the evoking of some delicate thing focussed instantaneously as by an eye which had unique faculties, or clothed as under enchantment by the science of a brush which never tires, never acquires vacant habits

of its own, but seems ever ready to respond to the unflagging 'will for perfection.'

The Baltasar Carlos in armour at Windsor and the series of dwarfs have to be mentioned, and then we come to the threshold of his second visit to Italy — a visit from which Velasquez expected the greatest things in the purchase of rare works by the greater masters, besides acquiring casts and moulds of antiques for the furnishing of the royal palaces.

The reign of Philip IV. was a period of revision of the royal treasure of painting, the re-setting as it were of the Crown pictures. The Buen Retiro had to be furnished with its dress of art; the palace of the Alcazar brought into line as a royal residence. Philip had made of the Sacristy of the Escorial a treasure-house of painting, sending there many of the works of highest repute in his possession. In these splendid arrangements Velasquez had his share; for in that period the circumstances of a royal life required the assistance of art, and an artist was then considered an expert in such matters.

The 'Bacchanal' and 'Garden of Loves' of Titian were acquired in 1642. The wonderful supply by Rubens and his factory had to be housed, and Philip, in this reign, when the possession of some fine works of art did not imply the useful-

ness of acquiring others, despatched Velasquez to carry out his boast that he would bring back 'some of the best work of Titian, Paul Veronese, Bassano, Raphael, Parmigiano, and the like.'

The year 1649 finds Velasquez again in Italy. Again the action of Spain is at variance with the national feeling in Italian politics; again Velasquez visits Venice and Rome at a bad moment for his venture; again we find his charm of manner valuable to him as a safe conduct or passport in his mission of lightening Italy of her art treasures, when for the first time she was willing to part with them — not as gifts and the proud evidence of her power and magnificence, as in the past, but in that spirit of indifference which we find in the sons of great collectors, a sort of fatigue of admiration; a wish to see in gold once more the things it had taken more than gold to make.

Some of the religious institutions and decaying families were willing to sell to the agents of Charles I., and even to Velasquez the Spaniard. But the latter was too late, the Mantuan collection was already gone. Even Venice, the London of Italy — that is, the market and pleasant place of the world — had become alive to the danger, prohibiting the removal of such works as Titian's 'Peter Martyr' under pain of death. Velasquez

met, therefore, with less success than he might have anticipated. Some fine pictures in the Prado remain associated with his name; the 'Paradise' by Tintoretto, the 'Sea Fight' by Tintoretto, the 'Venus and Adonis' from the studio of Veronese. But, to the student of pictures, of greater importance than his acquisitions, or the pictures that drifted ultimately to Spain on his initiative, is the portrait of the Pope now in the Doria Gallery at Rome, to which constant reference has been made in this chapter; though it stands related to only a small group of works by Velasquez — namely, the 'Lady with the Fan,' the 'Spinners,' the head of an ecclesiastic (belonging to Mr. R. Banks), and the portrait of a man in the possession of Mr. Edmund Davis. In these works we note a rich and nourished touch, the use of rich and varied glazes, the pitting of the flesh, etc., with red, applied afterwards and not under the body of the paint — a method not usually associated with Velasquez by the lovers of his silver manner.

The evidence of these technical details, the small looped impastos he uses in the body of his pigment, is all trifling enough, and only remotely related to the excellence of the works themselves; but those tendences which we may note developing in the 'Pulido Pareja,' the 'Baltasar Carlos'



VERONESE. — VENUS AND ADONIS

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at Windsor, and the 'Sebastian de Morra,' now characterise works which, together with one or two at Vienna, are less familiar to the critics and the public; — who before a Velasquez not cool, silvery, and a little flat in tone are apt to imagine the intervention of Mazo, an artist whose touch is monotonous, whose plastic sense is vague, and who replaces the qualities of emphasis and vitality which we admire in the art of his master by the mechanical imitation of his practice and his palette only.

The portrait of Pope Innocent x. has been so often praised and described that nothing remains to be added, but that it amply justifies its reputation. Reynolds's verdict, that it is the finest piece of portrait-painting in Rome, sums up the situation. When we realise the authority of the great Englishman upon a matter of practice, and that Velasquez was about as famous then as Caravaggio is now, the praise comes with still greater emphasis. In this work our interest in the sullen-looking sitter and his legend is not disappointed; the opportunity has stimulated Velasquez as a painter into greater emphasis and daring, and makes us regret the habitual employment of his brush in representing phlegmatic or anæmic royalties.

I have classed the 'Lady with the Fan' and

its preliminary study, the 'Lady in a Mantilla,' as contemporary with this work and with the 'Spinners.' I would place the portrait of the Moor Pareja, in the possession of Lord Carlisle, perhaps a little later, as the compliment of the master to the artist that his servant had now become.

The 'Hermes and Argus,' the 'Anchorites,' and the 'Don Juan de Austria,' show a brilliancy and variety of touch as if Velasquez, strengthened by what he had seen in Italy, had remembered certain technical accents of Tintoretto; though his old admiration of El Greco may he here bearing fruit at last in a technique and sense of colour more agitated and strange, more suggestive, less reliant than in the past upon the cautious weighing of tones and the measuring of planes.

I am inclined to think that his return to Spain not only saw the completion of the 'Spinners,' the painting of the 'Anchorites,' and the 'Hermes and Argus,' but that earlier works were in part rehandled about then. The exquisite 'Isabelle de Bourbon' belonging to Mr. E. Huth, the date of which might be given approximately as 1626, has a bold pink curtain slashed in beyond the figure over a curtain which probably was once a cool dark crimson. This would seem to have been done to make it hang as a pendant to the



VELASQUEZ. — QUEEN MARIANA

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'Queen Mariana' at the Prado, with a pink curtain which was painted after his return, and parts of which are also drastically revised. The early hunting portraits may have then come in for some repainting; the touch in parts seems more rapid than the period of their painting would quite warrant. We feel with Velasquez, as he grows older, an ever-increasing wish to will his paint upon the canvas with less process and less machinery, if I may use the word. In the 'Queen Mariana,' the new consort of the King, and in the exquisite children at Vienna, we note the high-water mark of his practice in direct, yet exquisitely modulated use of his pigment.

In the 'Anchorites' and the unfinished 'Don Juan de Austria,' we admire the utmost effect produced with the most rapid and varied handling; the other late works of the painter, the 'Montañes,' the 'Æsop,' the 'Meninas,' show even greater breadth, greater decision, but perhaps less subtlety; the painter dallies less with the beauties of his medium, in a greater effort at that unity which he now seems to foresee from the first.

It would be pedantic to imagine that this course was wilful and absolute; the degree of interest experienced by the painter in each work, those chances of mood, the surface of the canvas, the

very chance quality of the pigment will lay down conditions for any artist, however great, within which he must work. Throughout his career, changes of process do not modify the aim of Velasquez; who, from the day he painted the brother of Philip IV. with the glove, to the day he painted the 'Infante Prosper,' followed a steady course of evolution, loading his canvas more or less, changing his brushes, and using glazes more or less scientifically, more or less arbitrarily.

From the day when Velasquez obtained those exquisitely gradated surfaces of the Isabelle de Bourbon belonging to Mr. E. Huth, in a smooth and delicately modulated pigment, to the day when he painted the wistful-looking Don Juan de Austria with a touch that is all touch and go, light, but not slight as Gainsborough — mere canvas stain, in fact — Velasquez remains the same master of planes, transition, tone, the same builder of perfectly spaced and planned pictures; cautious of his pattern and silhouette almost to a fault, leaving nothing to chance, but availing himself of the lucky passage to hand in the process of the work itself, and retained by his quickened sense of its possible place in his definite scheme.

There is in Velasquez no lucky muddling about with pigment such as we find in Millais and

Monet, and even in the admirable work of Constable. Velasquez had been chosen by many moderns as the pioneer of their efforts; but unlike his heavy modern descendant Courbet, and his sprightly descendant Manet, he was more talented than his brushes.

In some respects Velasquez is even an æsthete of the brush; he has a classical and formal mind, more so than Titian, whom he worshipped. One feels in Velasquez the evidence of sacrifice and revision as much as in the work of the modern painter who has the greatest affinity with his practice, namely Whistler. Velasquez, waiting as he does upon what his attention to things at hand could afford him, remains the first of the moderns — since that is the general modern point of view. He is immeasurably more modern than Rembrandt, who need not be mentioned here at all, for it is an antiquated criticism that sees in him the realist only, the man who merely painted what he saw. With Velasquez realism is tranquil and natural; it is free from the wish to astonish or offend or merely flatter the man of the middle classes and his wife; whereas in the realism of nineteenth-century painters we note on the part of artists, themselves of the middle class, the wish to astonish their friends and relations. We have Courbet's polemical can-

vases and Manet's glimpses of the demi-monde; mere vignettes in aim, in both cases, exaggerated into pictures as large as the 'Lances': or else we have J. E. Millais, the English Velasquez of the seventies, painting, to please the English gentry, those pictures which we still find as Christmas plates, fading away upon the walls of bedrooms at the seaside.

Velasquez was once called by J. F. Millet 'un peintre de race.' That subtle French painter Ricard, at the time of Velasquez's first great vogue in the nineteenth century, called him 'le premier peintre de genre.' These few words would describe him well enough if he had not painted the 'Lances,' in which a genre subject is treated on a higher level, or the 'Hermes and Argus,' in which we detect a dramatic power of suggestion we should not anticipate from the simple stage management of his early 'Forge of Vulcan,' and his tactful 'Coronation of the Virgin,' which is perhaps all there is to be said in praise of these two underrated but not empassioning pictures.

As we approach the last phase of Velasquez's career after his return to Spain, we find him more than ever a painter; we shall also note that his 'Meninas' entitles him to be called the first genre painter in the world, but genre handled by

a master of a rank we do not find elsewhere in that branch of art. He is a holder of a principality in art, whereas Terborch, Vermeer, De Hooch, and Chardin each hold only a house with delicate rooms, shaped to humbler ends: their art but just emerges above mere exquisite still-life painting.

The portraits of the Infanta Margarita in the Louvre and at Vienna, and the Infante Prosper belong, like the famous 'Las Meninas,' to the new conditions at the court Velasquez served, not only as painter now, but almost as a friend, and with the increasing burdens of his post as Aposentador Mayor. The 'Meninas' is a record therefore not only of the painter's art but of his later days.

During his career, Velasquez had seen many changes at the Spanish court. The presence of the frail, fair children of Philip's second marriage marks the dwindling hopes of the royal house itself, which had in its heyday given so spontaneous a welcome to the young Velasquez. Olivares had had his day, had strutted and posed, large, florid, and astute, in the canvases of Velasquez. Spinola, made immortal in the 'Lances,' had sunk also under adverse chances; the bright engaging child Baltasar Carlos, and Queen Isabelle de Bourbon, the French exile in the Spanish

court, were gone. We find Philip more than ever interested in art, more than ever a friend of the painter of his house, almost daily in the studio of the artist. In the 'Meninas' we have a proof of this familiarity; and in this painting of a dusky room of the royal palace, the record of its sunshine in the little white head; — the Infanta Margarita, who with her pale, frail brother afforded Velasquez the chance of some of his greatest triumphs.

The portraits of the Infanta Margarita at Vienna and Paris show the little princess at an earlier age than in the 'Las Meninas.' These most exquisite of official portraits reveal the sitter in the tiny pomp of royal childhood with her elaborate toilets, and the diminutive fan she holds in the blue picture at Vienna, one of the most radiant pictures in existence.

In 'Las Meninas,' still popularly known as 'La Familia,' the Princess Margarita is at home in a less official mood, refusing in fact to grace Velasquez with her royal countenance at all; she has turned her back on him, and touches listlessly the toy the lady-in-waiting presents to her. Two dwarfs are there, a lazy dog, one or two familiars and royal servants take part in the scene; court etiquette is relaxed, and we see the painter the amused spectator of the comedy.

The King and Queen themselves are present, reflected in the glass beyond, there to ensure the docility of the sitter.

A description of the picture does not convey its charm. The art of the painter conceals the fact that the subject itself is of the slightest and almost trivial; it might in fact read like the description of a popular academy picture, turned into, shall we say, ' Her First Visit to the Photographer,' — to be followed next year by her later visit as a bride, or her last visit as a grandmother.

The humorous touch is of the lightest, no undue emphasis underlies any part of the work; the picture, even in its now ' skinned ' condition, holds the art-lover and the public alike. There are few places in any gallery where so many and such various people meet at once.

I am aware, in saying this, that it is the most famous picture in the Prado, that it is hung apart in a small room with chairs where people must inevitably congregate. I would even add that I know of no picture so charmingly shown or lit, in its small grey room with old chairs and shuttered window, in imitation of the one in the picture itself, and with an old mirror in which the canvas can be seen reflected. This arrangement suggests perhaps rather the venture of a dealer than the atmosphere of a museum; but it is done with

such reticence and such tact, that we may for once be reconciled to this stage-management of a work of art — legitimate in itself, since good pictures 'love' furniture and the vicinity of beautiful things; they are 'happy' in a living environment, and the top light and glare of the exhibition counts for much in the ugliness of most modern work, and in the indifference of the public itself — which is asked to detect a masterpiece, seen like a criminal in a crowd of works similar in general appearance.

I have stated that 'Las Meninas' has suffered from over-cleaning; and there is no doubt that a tender and varied glaze has been removed from this lightly and rapidly painted work.

In this canvas old patches covering holes and rents which originally mimicked the local colour of the picture now stand out not only darker (as we might expect), but as patches of extreme dark. The painting of the room, and of Velasquez himself, has suffered least; the lady on her knees most, the profile having less envelope and delicacy even than the admirable copy by J. Phillip, hung in desolate solitude in the Diploma Gallery. What remains is of first-rate quality, though this is less noticeable in the heads than in accessories, such as the light on the wall and ceiling, which is marvellous. The School of Rubens's picture, No.



VELASQUEZ. — "LAS MENINAS"

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1637, still in the Prado, is exquisitely indicated on the wall beyond; the other canvas, a 'Cephalus and Procris' of the same *provenance*, may be still in Spain, but is not at Madrid.

There are exquisite pieces, like the head, hands, and palette of the painter, the bows on the Infanta's dress and the dress itself, in which actual portions of the white canvas are left; but some subtlety is absent from the dwarfs, and the glimpse. At a distance the work is all that we expect, but on closer inspection one sees that the modelling and the surfaces have been impoverished.[1]

The 'Anchorites' passes as one of the latest

[1] One of the treasures of Rokeby Park consists in an exquisite sketch for this work. It conforms in touch and colour to other known sketches by Velasquez, and is, moreover, exquisite as mere painting. Some critics, among whom I regret to have noted Mr. Claude Phillips, have pronounced themselves against this sketch on mechanical grounds, which are insufficient in themselves and leave room for a different conclusion. The most serious objection is that sketch and picture conform too much in essentials of arrangement. The squaring up of the canvas underneath the painting of the Infanta was adduced as evidence of a copyist anxious to retain the proportions of the original: to me it would point to the artist's anxiety to retain the facts of another sketch, or the existing proportions of the larger work. It is unlikely that so important a work as 'Las Meninas' should have been improvised upon a large canvas without preliminary studies; the work itself at Madrid is without revision, which is unusual with Velasquez. Then the famous portrait of the King and Queen reflected in the mirror, which the guide still points out in the original canvas, is replaced in the sketch by an Italian landscape with a temple on a hill.

canvases by the master. In workmanship it is most allied to the 'Don John of Austria,' a picture which most writers are a little at a loss where to place in the sequence of the artist's work. Its design would seem to belong to the period when Velasquez painted the more decorative works which we associate with the equestrian pictures; but in painting it belongs to a later mood. Judged by the temper in which it is approached, it ranges with the painter's last works, in which we no longer find the go and dash of his equestrian groups or his 'Admiral,' or of the 'Pope'; but a more tranquil manner, and a more wistful outlook upon the human face. The 'Æsop,' the 'Montañes,' the 'Don Juan' have the faces of men who have thought and suffered. The 'Infante Prosper' is touched with the timid wonder of a frail childhood. Philip IV. himself, in the head of the National Gallery, is no longer the Prince of his early portraits. We have to record the radiant and enchanting 'Infanta in Red,' it is true; but the sense of vitality we noted in his middle work is less tenaciously expressed, less insisted upon; the mood of the painter before these canvases seems more meditative.

Professor Justi has wondered if his many occupations had not led to a swifter method of execution; this theory is not borne out by the

'Infante Prosper' and the 'Infanta in Red,' which are works showing the greatest refinements in execution. I think the explanation is obvious; — that the temper of the painter we found tenacious and cautious as a young man, frank and self-controlled at the middle of his career, had, with the advance of years, assumed a graver, a more tender caste; that it became controlled by a surer method, which was in itself the result of a lifetime of experience and practice. We may prefer the more emphatic realism of the 'Lances,' the more varied resources shown in the 'Spinners' and the 'Lady with the Fan'; but the art, the self-control, is certainly not less in the 'Meninas' or the 'Æsop': and in the 'Anchorites' and the unfinished 'Don Juan' we have a synthesis of his qualities as a painter — his constant alertness, his sensitiveness, his powers of sacrifice, his tact.

Towards the end of his career the painter would seem to have wished to baffle his critics: and side by side with the 'Anchorites,' which is all improvisation in touch, hangs the 'Infanta in Red,' in which we know not what to admire most — the daring juxtaposition of the various reds, scarlets, and pink, of which it is an arrangement, or the exquisite variety and finish of the workmanship. Group a few carnations and roses in

a bowl of silver and you get a hint of the colour; the tender painting of the face is indescribable; the reproduction can speak for the boldness and beauty of the design.

The composition of the 'Anchorites' is singularly unexpected and strange. The not very important subject, the pious meeting and conversation of two saints, together with one or two incidents of their lives, presupposes little that is interesting or significant to the eye or stimulating to the imagination. The picture shows signs of revision in its process, and may well have been started quite casually, till in its making it grew more and more interesting and absorbing; till, in the opinion of the writer, it became a work which for certain beauties of vision and execution is comparable to only one other work by Velasquez, namely, the 'Spinners.' The subject is commonplace, the situation being one that might have satisfied Ribera, as yielding the opportunity of grouping two picturesque old models in a wild and telling landscape of rock. This is the legend: —

St. Anthony having visited St. Paul the hermit, found that the latter did not give his bread a thought, trusting in matters of this world to God alone. In this pious contest St. Paul raised his hands in prayer, and behold a raven brought



VELASQUEZ. — THE ANCHORITES

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him bread, just as in the past Elijah had been fed in the wilderness.

Velasquez, without too much emphasis, has expressed the piety of the one old man and the reverend astonishment of the other. We note in a ravishing little glimpse St. Anthony knocking at the door of the cave, a piece of miniature and exquisite genre painting done by a great master. In the distance along a winding river we see the burial of St. Paul by St. Anthony; and beyond, the indication of legendary incident when the Demon bade St. Anthony turn stones into bread. Velasquez has thrown the incidents into a romantic landscape with a decorative sky. He tells what story he has to tell quite simply, without stress or emphasis, and delights us by his fantastic spacing and aerial painting. The eye follows the delicate use of the brush in the landscape, the rapid Gainsborough-like touches with which the hills are pencilled in, the fresh blue of the river against the silver stretch of sand. The climbing plant against the tree carries the eye up along a pattern of touches which look like a cluster of moths. The pigment is often of the thinnest, a mere rubbing of broken colour. The local colour, the conventionalities of tone, are replaced by interpretive methods, something which is more likely than actually true.

A painter's life is unfortunately not devoted solely to the practice of his art, and it is to the unfortunate crossing of other duties that we owe the death of Velasquez, at a moment when not one of his faculties as an artist had failed him; or rather at a moment when he had achieved at last that skill, grown of knowledge, which he had not possessed when he painted works equally valuable, equally suggestive, but not marked by that delicate facility which was at length his. Death found Velasquez, therefore, not in a partial development of new aims or new ideals, as it did Titian; it found him in full possession of his old faculties and aims in art. As with Rubens, Velasquez's last canvases are his most masterly; they show, in fact, the most fortunate blending of his gifts.

Some artists, like Raphael or Van Dyck, exhaust in a short lifetime the substance of a long one. Others, like Rembrandt or Michael Angelo, scale at the last yet other eminences in their art. With two, Rubens and Velasquez, we wonder why death drew near. Their art shows to the last so wonderful a sense of vitality and resource; no sunset splendours as in Rembrandt and Titian, but the broad daylight of endeavour, when it is really good to work. During the festivities attending the betrothal of the French King

Louis XIV. and the Infanta Maria, Velasquez, already ailing, did not give himself the care he should have done; we find him ill for a little while on the return journey, then the end came: and in 1660 Spain lost Velasquez, her greatest claim upon the gratitude of Europe. He was sixty-one at his death.

One experiences a sense of irritation in thinking of the years he might yet have lived. Still his life had been a happy one, and he was spared at the end the tragic circumstances of other lives equally great. We have no cause for bitterness, we merely feel the accidental, the casual work of Death itself, brushing away so useful and exquisite a life. We feel as if we saw some common hand painting out one of his pictures, so that where a moment ago there was life and charm, there is charm no longer.

These few pages on the sequence of his pictures and the aim of his life bring me again to the question, What should be our estimate of the work of Velasquez? and wherein lies his message to the world?

We have heard the old-fashioned name 'the prince of painters' given to him by a generation anxious to make amends for past neglect. There are old-fashioned, ready-made phrases that are not always without value in describing artists;

and thus we hear that Michael Angelo was a prophet or seer, Leonardo a magician, and if my memory does not fail me, Rembrandt becomes a 'wizard.' These guide-book sentences are foolish, but yet not so foolish after all. We have heard also that the 'sceptre' of painting belongs to Titian. Has not Velasquez himself said that Titian bears the flag? We have Rubens the Grandee, the Regent, as it were, of the arts, like Titian, also once 'the prince of painters.' There are other handy phrases, according to which Van Dyck is a courtier, and Velasquez 'the most gentlemanly of painters.' We have heard him called *un peintre de race* or merely 'the first of genre painters.' Now all these easy sentences, as far as Velasquez is concerned, really corroborate each other; save, of course, the phrase 'the prince of painters,' which has belonged to Titian too long to be taken away from him; least of all by the man who inherited, if not Titian's originality and power, a great measure of his supreme distinction.

Distinction — this last word is the word which would have had to be invented to describe the art of Velasquez if it had not already existed; and to justify this statement I will venture to recall a few words of my own actually in this book which to me at least sum up, not the secret

of his gift, but some of the causes that contribute to make its charm, its hold upon our attention.

'The marvellous art of Velasquez is one of balance, moderation, and self-control. Few artists of his rank have contented themselves with a field so restricted, or have concealed with such naturalness and tact the effort or ease with which their work was done. In a subtle blending of forces, none of them quite supreme or unsurpassed by others, he is able to conceal the effort of fusion by a lack of all affectation, and beat out into a middle course without conveying a latent sense of effort or mediocrity.

'Other artists have revealed new aspects of nature, or combinations of aspects, have founded schools or destroyed them. Velasquez did no such thing; his aim was the perfection that lies in reason and moderation.

'He is the profound student who makes no parade of his knowledge, the profound observer for whom observation and mere curiosity is not an end in itself. His native gifts, at the first neither ample nor original, were husbanded till they yielded one of the most delicate examples of what painting can do to interpret or transmute what in any other man's work would have been little more than fine piece-painting.'

We forget that he was neither in line or colour

a creative painter as Rubens is or Rembrandt is; we yield to the freshness of his vision, the delicate science of his brush, the gravity and charm of his artistic personality — to his supreme distinction.

CHAPTER VI

THE ITALIAN SCHOOLS IN THE PRADO

If the seventeenth century had become blind to the beauty of the work of the early masters, the eighteenth was rather more clairvoyant. We find in the development of picture-collecting and the interest in archæology which characterised that century, the first timid sign of the renewed interest in Primitives which marks the nineteenth century. On the whole we may easily exaggerate the indifference of the eighteenth century towards the early schools, since the Napoleonic plunder of Italy contained so many fine works by the early Italian masters; this at a time when an interest in such things had hardly yet begun to be felt, and when, too, the shadow of the David tyranny in painting, which was little inclined towards the unclassical efforts of the great Primitives, brooded over France. The masterpieces of the Prado were collected in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the collection was diluted with works of less merit in the eighteenth. It was in the

seventeenth century, however, under Philip IV., that one of the two quatrocento pictures, 'The Death of the Virgin,' ascribed to Mantegna, was acquired by the Spanish crown.

After the series of Titians and Venetian canvases, the other Italian nucleus is formed by the series of pictures by Raphael and his school. There is no sequence in the choice of the few Italian works in the Prado. Two or three works by Andrea del Sarto and Correggio — that is all, and with them that usual allowance of 'Tenebrosi,' 'Faprestos,' and other mannerists.

There are few names in art that conjure up a more agreeable mass of associated ideas and impressions than that of Fra Angelico. He is one of those few pietistic painters the quality of whose piety remains above suspicion, and who found a formula for expressing his ideals in admirable art. His work is unique in appearance, singular in its consistency, and constant in its felicity; among the large number of his paintings that have come down to us, there is not a panel we should care to lose. Angelico's work in its easy happiness is like 'laughter heard in heaven.' No artist has been more constant in his aim, none has reaped his own reward more surely than this 'angel painter,' or as we shall still call him, Fra Angelico. 'The Annunciation' at Madrid

resembles in its design the fresco in the Corridor of St. Marco; it is different in detail, colour, less profoundly felt and realised; and it is further differentiated by the addition on the right hand of an 'Expulsion from Paradise' of our first parents, seen in a tangle of growths — palm, orange, rose, and privet — unusual in Angelico's work. The grass is summary in rendering, as is always the case with this painter; full of stars, and the gleam of angel flowers, rather than of actual plants, though, curiously enough, as if by another hand, in the foreground is a tuft of pinks painted from nature.

In no picture of the painter is one more conscious of the blithe and delicate spirit of his work; one thinks of the colours of Easter, of wheat, almond blossom, of the tender pink-white wool of lambs, of gold and the gum of incense; such a work would seem to be painted with the fresh juices of flowers, the substance of anemones, the blue of the speedwell, and the blood of poppies.

We find a very different phase of emotion and thought on turning to the small 'Death of the Virgin,' ascribed to the great Paduan, Mantegna, in whom so much that is typically Tuscan finds expression. The outward influence of the Paduan Squarcione on Mantegna has always seemed to the present writer unessential and superficial,

like the trace of Perugino upon the art of Raphael; and the unfailing effort, the noble intellectuality Mantegna displays, to be of authentic descent from those great and passionate Florentines, Donatello and Paolo Uccello.

With Mantegna we can realise how noble and how great in the sense of responsibility was the spirit that ruled the makers of the Renaissance. Turning from their great works, we may even pause to realise how noble the society must have been which made such efforts possible; that society for which such work was not too strange, too fine, or (to use a more modern phrase) 'not proven'; that is, still lacking in the comfortable respectability that scarcity and price bestow.

I would suggest that this small picture belongs to Mantegna's first stay at Mantua. In the catalogue of Charles I.'s collection it was described — 'a little piece by Andrea Mantegna, being the dying of our lady, the apostles standing about with white candles lighted in their hands; and in the landscape where the town of Mantua is painted is the waterlake, where a bridge is over the said water towards the town. . . .'

The scale of form in this picture is more gaunt and ascetic than in Mantegna's later manner or manners; more like that of the predellas of the

St. Zeno altar-piece. I do not think anything points to the possibility of its execution by any of his sons; it is too early in mood.

It hangs in the dark, cracked and retouched, yet not sufficiently damaged to justify that convenient solution that it is repainted. In design it is worthy of Mantegna. Doubts were first cast upon this picture by Morelli, a critic capable of slips; though nothing in his opinions of the Prado would point to any ruffling of temper that might account for fastidious attributions, or that occasional blunting of his perceptive faculties which usually affected him in German galleries. Like certain prints by Mantegna, — the 'Descent from the Cross,' for instance, — this picture is at once like, yet unlike, the master's painting. In itself it is a work full of an austere yet exquisite charm.

Raphael Sanzio is still credited in the catalogue with some seven or eight works. Of these two only are entirely by his hand. Other pictures which left Raphael's studio as his work are really his, though the work of the assistant and the restorer may have intervened. There remain those other works, attributed to him on later authority, but which may be dismissed as not his on internal evidence.

I would advocate a more guarded way of specify-

ing the importance of an assistant in a picture than is now prevalent.

If the design in a work (the structural element of its visible presence) belongs to the master, behind it we notice his intellectual bent, and are able to estimate the creative force which was his. The modern tendency is to recognise, if possible, evidence of an assistant's hand, find his name, and so to dismiss the work forthwith as by the master 'only in part.' This is misleading. More often still the work goes to the credit of the assistant whatever may be the quality and character of invention in his own authenticated works. It is in this way that Raphael has become, since 1512, the shadow of Giulio Romano, whose odious work in the Vatican and at Mantua might have stood as a warning against such injustice.

I do not know if I am beating the wind, lashing imaginary persons, but I have found among intelligent art-lovers, and experts even, a tendency to drop all interest in a masterpiece at the mere suggestion of some real or fancied inferiority or blemish in execution, just as we see an ape drop the piece of paper he had prized but the moment before. To be on one's guard, to take nothing for granted, is well enough, but let us avoid that warped point of view which is that of the lawyer to whom nothing need be certain, or at any rate



RAPHAEL. — THE HOLY FAMILY WITH THE LAMB

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free from suspicion; above all, let us avoid an increased suspicion before a work of art because it is too important to be genuine — I had almost said too good.

This digression will bear directly upon 'Lo Spasimo,' and 'La Perla,' and I have made it wishing to guard myself against the accusation of sensationalism when treating of a famous work by Raphael, the portraits of Navagero and Beazzano, on which two copies in the Prado cast an interesting side-light. Of this picture I shall have something to say later on.

'The Holy Family with the Lamb' is one of the treasures of the Prado; like most of the smaller pictures belonging to Raphael's Tuscan period, it is more mature than his more important early works, in which the elements influencing him occur in a state of perplexing fusion, so that we may well understand that he was completing work ordered or begun some time before, as was the case with the 'Pierpont Morgan Raphael' and the 'Ansidei Madonna.'

'The Holy Family with the Lamb' is dated 1507, the year before Raphael's departure for Rome and the year after which the formal Peruginesque 'Ansidei Madonna' was finished for its purchasers. But the picture in the Prado shows Raphael painting above all to charm himself; it

is fresh in workmanship, spontaneous in mood and design; it should be grouped with those more secular or even playfully conceived Holy Families like the ' Esterhazy Madonna ' and the ' Madonna Canigiani.' In the ' Madonna of the Lamb ' we note an even stronger influence of Leonardo than in the ' Madonna of the Meadow ' and the study in the Louvre for the ' Madonna of the Palm,' or the study for the Erato at Windsor. We can say more; the influence of Leonardo's ' St. Anne ' in the Louvre is behind Raphael's figure of the bending Virgin and the playful child toying with the lamb: the puckered sleeve, the bent knee, even the head-dress are Leonardesque. The charming landscape with its winding path and wayfarer presents a difference of treatment also; it is more fantastic — more entertaining, I had almost said — than is the wont in early pictures by Raphael. Translate this picture into a different scale of colour and touch, and it might pass for a design by the Umbro-Lombard painter Bazzi at the period of his work to which we owe the Leonardesque ' Madonna and the Lamb ' in the Brera at Milan.

This small work by Raphael is in other respects more fortunate than kindred works of greater importance. It is free from repainting, if a little over-cleaned. We therefore escape from



RAPHAEL. — PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG CARDINAL

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the heavy restorer's stipple in the blue draperies from which very few Raphaels are free. It is a delightful idyll which curiously reveals the temper of the Renaissance; the Virgin is represented as a bland yet charming woman, the Holy Child is playing with the lamb, the symbol of his sacrifice, whilst St. Joseph leans on his traveller's staff, a charmed spectator.

One feels that it might illustrate some lost legend concerning the flight into Egypt, like the palm fruit and angelic fountain Correggio has illustrated in 'The Scodella,' how a lamb came forward to testify, even as the shepherds had worshipped before the kings and St. Simon, only there is no need for such ingenuity; this work is instinct with lyrical thought such as we find in the 'St. Anne' of Leonardo, and of which the 'Madonna della Scodella' of Correggio is the culminating effort. It illustrates a moment when the gods had again become reconciled to the beauty and charm of life.

Of far greater importance in the work of Raphael than this enchanting trifle, this delicate, playful, but occasional work, is the Portrait of a Young Cardinal, which, owing to various reasons, principally the inaccessibility of Madrid itself, does not enjoy the general reputation it deserves. This picture is also over-cleaned, but let us hasten to

add that in quality of workmanship and preservation it is surpassed only by the Castiglione in the Louvre and has no other rival.

The slight coldness in scale of colour in the Prado portrait is attributable to the picture-cleaner; the delicate modelling of the mouth discounts a slight lack of sensitiveness in the eyelids, which are over regular, though this does not interfere with the delicate animation of the face itself. The cap, the cape, are both painted with extraordinary care and breadth, the grain of the watered silk being further insisted upon by the trend of the pigment. The consideration of this marvellous portrait of the young Cardinal brings one to the discussion of two good old copies of the portrait of 'Navagero and Beazzano,' the original hanging as it does in the Doria Gallery in Rome. This famous double portrait enjoys so great a reputation that one hesitates before attacking — not its mastery and beauty, but in part its accepted authorship. This is the statement of my case. The picture in Rome presents two persons facing each other yet unrelated, just as we might find them in a Venetian canvas by Sebastiano del Piombo. Throughout his work Raphael designs from a totally different point of view. The Peruginesque period once passed, we find a great persistence in focussing the interest

of his pictures, and in relating part to part; one might even say that there is often over-concentration and balance in his design. The admirable portrait of the beardless man Beazzano is conceived as we should imagine Raphael to arrange his sitter, and the pose of the hand in relation to the tranquil posing of the head is in his manner. The quality of contour which conveys the roundness and density of the human figure is characteristic; the eye slips round the forms, conscious of their variety and volume. In actual painting we also note the tendency to flush the more fleshy forms of the face, the chin, lids, tip of nose, in contrast to a more sallow local colour in the half tones, — still a survival in Raphael's practice of his Umbrian training. Before this part of the picture there is no possibility of a doubt, no possibilty of any collaboration; it is by Raphael. But the other figure — Navagero — is conceived and painted quite differently. The sitter in this fine and energetic portrait looks sharply over his shoulder towards the spectator; the cloak forms a sharp straight line in total contrast to the rounded forms of his fellow-sitter's dress. The dusky and orange complexion of the man is rendered by a free use of glaze over a simple and unvaried underpaint; the ear (instanced by

Morelli as Raphaelesque) is lacking in the fleshy quality Morelli has so admirably described elsewhere as peculiar to Raphael; it is starved in the shape of the lobe and placed at an acute angle on the head. Both heads are painted on separate pieces of canvas which have been joined. Both men are rendered in separate copies at the Prado. May not this indicate indirectly that the Roman picture was once two separate pictures? I would add, however, that I arrived at this conclusion before I had seen or heard of the copies at Madrid.

I would therefore suggest, in the case of the original work at Rome, that — either in the lifetime of Piombo, or more probably later — a picture by him was joined to one by Raphael da Urbino.

I recognise in the work of the Venetian painter the influence of Raphael. I have not the slightest wish to forthwith dismiss his share as ' coarse,' or ' ill drawn,' or ' repulsive,' — the usual formulas to express doubt. I wish merely to point out that the portrait of Navagero is different, — more summary in conception and execution, — above all, different in spirit.

The carrying out of the still popular ' Madonna of the Fish ' is now generally attributed to Giulio Romano; it may be grouped, according to its scheme of design and sense of form, with the



RAPHAEL (?) — THE MADONNA OF THE FISH

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more engaging earlier work, the ' Madonna of the Diadem ' in the Louvre, designed by Raphael, and with the later and unpleasant Madonna, with the beardless St. Joseph, at St. Petersburg, attributed to Penni. The ' Madonna of the Fish ' is on a scale in which the somewhat vague and leathery forms and surfaces become lifeless and unpleasant, the effect being over-bland. I have never understood how Giulio Romano, whose rounded and over-modelled forms are so recognisable, should have displayed quite different characteristics and a different scale of colour in this work. The St. Petersburg picture (which is known to me only in photography) is generally attributed to Penni; the ' Madonna of the Fish ' should share the same attribution. Penni's part in the work of Raphael seems so small, despite his nickname of Il Fattore, whilst that of Giulio Romano has become so great, that Raphael must have spent most of his hours not devoted to the Fornarina in cleaning Giulio's brushes, whilst Penni executed those slight caligraphic pen-drawings with which his name is usually associated.

The painting of the ' Madonna and the Fish ' is not by Raphael, and it is not by Giulio. The design of the picture shows that degree of realisation which at the best would have satisfied us in a small design only, and it is throughout vacant

and insincere in execution. The charming motive of the eager Christ-child leaning towards Tobias does not figure with sufficient prominence or conviction; the charming painter's motive in the arrangement of the hands of the Angel and Tobias is also not insisted on; there remains the engaging pose of the angel's head and line of throat, a certain gravity in the motive of the watchful St. Jerome; and that is all we can praise in this scraped, retouched, and damaged picture. Giulio Romano's long list of heavy and unpleasant paintings may be shortened, I think, by this one, in which we note the wrecking of a design due originally to the initiative of Raphael, but not suited to the scale on which it has been carried out by a timid and unemphatic hand. In the opinion of the present writer the monotonous and oval forms and planes in the picture would point to Penni as its principal executant, a due share being given also to several old and modern picture cleaners and restorers.

Few pictures have so lapsed in the estimation of the world as the once famous 'Spasimo di Sicilia.' Thirty or forty years ago this was the masterpiece of the Prado; to-day any writer upon art can give its execution to any assistant, or, without protest, deny Raphael's share in the work altogether. Neither course is justified.

We have in this tarnished work much in mere logical invention and stage management with which Raphael must be credited. We note in its execution evidence of the interference of the old-fashioned restorer heightening the lights and darkening the shadows, cleaning up draperies, giving more emphasis to the eyes, and in restorer's fashion, more distinctness to the contours and local colours — more picture-restorer's style, in fact.

We have in the 'Spasimo' one of Raphael's claims to having formed the academic and the Catholic model of religious subjects, no less surely than in the nobler cartoons at South Kensington. This picture, with many faults and some serious qualities, has become the pattern for the 'Ways of the Cross' in all Catholic countries. On a lower plane of effort it shows, like the 'Transfiguration,' the clouding of Raphael's sense of direct and beautiful design. Unlike the 'Transfiguration,' however, it is entirely the work of assistants, and I think Mr. Berenson is right in recognising the predominance of Giulio, whilst in part he instances the less accented and more vacant forms of Penni.

To Raphael we must assign the general design, the invention of the principal groups; the damaged study for the Virgin and women in the Uffizi is hung too high for the estimate of it as

a sketch by Raphael for this painting to have any certainty. The more elaborately shaded copy by Giulio, preserved at Lille, would however point to Raphael's having done studies for it.

The Holy Family known as 'La Perla' enjoys also only a reputation of esteem; once a picture of great price, it obtained for its owner a marquisate, and in the sale of Charles I. it realised the sum of £2000. It was christened 'La Perla' by Philip IV. himself on its arrival in Spain. It now passes as almost entirely the work of Giulio Romano, done while he was still under the influence of Raphael.

Like the Holy Family of Francis I., I think it should be considered as partly Raphael's: such works as the 'St. Michael' and the 'Catherine of Aragon' being in reality the sole work of his pupils, done as complimentary pictures and for importation outside Italy in Raphael's lifetime. I would go further, and consider 'La Perla' an unfinished work of Raphael, showing largely the workmanship of Giulio Romano, who completed it. The design of the picture, or more properly of the Virgin, displays (notably in the upper part) a refinement and a science which we do not expect from the assistant Giulio; the draperies upon the sleeve are logically constructed, with a sense of their variety and perspective. The figure of

the Saviour is tight and round in modelling, and the rest of the picture shows those round unvaried forms and high lights of Giulio Romano. The St. Anne, like the elaborate landscape, partakes even of the nature of an afterthought. The picture has suffered in tone from the rising of the dark monochrome over which it was painted. Viewed as a design, the Virgin and children are delightfully placed, and the large light portions of the picture form an agreeable mass; though in details, such as hands, feet, and accessories, we miss the science, concentration, and distinction of Raphael's work, and recognise the hand of Giulio.

If we turn to the hideous 'Madonna of the Lizard' by Giulio Romano, which hangs near 'La Perla.' we realise what the pupil was capable of, without the design of the master; here we remark the unconcentrated lights, the tight round forms, the lack of variety in the rendering of surfaces and texture, the lax sense of design, the absence of sacrifice or even of foreshortening. Here all is round and splay, the action of the children is mincing, the poise of the Virgin's hand pretentious: there is an absence of reticence, an absence of taste. The heavy colour falls into those purplish blacks in the shadows which would seem to haunt Giulio Romano, like the heavy orange brown and brick tones of his flesh. Here

we have Giulio under no restraining influence; it is Raphael's intonation repeated by a phonograph. For these reasons, the present writer considers that the main elements in the design of 'La Perla' are by Raphael.

Near to these works hangs the odious 'Visitation,' in which we may seek in vain for a trace of the rhythmic and responsive design of Raphael. Is it possible to imagine a treatment of this subject more flat, more fatuous? Think of Giotto designing the 'Visitation'! No, such a test would be trying to Raphael himself! Think merely of Ghirlandaio, or even Albertinelli. How terrible was the fall if these assistants of Raphael to whom we glibly give this share or that, in the Stanze, the 'Mass of Bolsena,' or the 'Heliodorus,' or the Cartoons. We turn with a shudder from the Sala del Constantino, the Raphael Bible, and from these we can venture hardened and unafraid to Mantua, where Giulio with a million of assistants shows the texture of which he was made. How was Raphael able to utilise Giulio Romano, this coarse and slovenly nature; how was the master draughtsman, that Raphael was, with his almost unique sense for logic in the treatment of plane, and for articulations, able to utilise this copyist of the Trajan column, this man Giulio? to whom form was a series of emphatic



RAPHAEL (?) — THE MADONNA DELLA ROSA

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conventions; emphatic, yet without the power of accent and without the power of sacrifice or reserve; truly a man whose five fingers were five thumbs.

The 'Madonna della Rosa' shows a more rhythmic, one had almost said ornamental, sense than we find in the work of Giulio. Formerly in the collection of the great Earl of Arundel, it passed there (perhaps on some authority of tradition or document) as the work of Perino del Vaga.[1]

Madrid is not the place in which to estimate Raphael, the 'love-child' of the Renaissance, or the force, unique of its kind, that he has been in the art of the world. The works here do not afford the means for an estimate. Of the series still bearing his name, two alone are possessed of that felicity, that rich 'temperance,' that instinctive sense of balance and control which was his; they are the 'Madonna of the Lamb' and the 'Young Cardinal': though in the opinion of the writer the discredited 'Perla' shows a last flickering of that flame we see burning low in the design of the 'Attila' and in the 'Transfiguration,' while the 'Spasimo,' the 'Madonna of the Fish' belong to his initiative, and were to

[1] Perino's share in the Stanze and his works in the Palazzo Doria at Genoa are too different in aim and, above all, too much repainted to give us a cue, though the affected grace and facility of the work may point to Perino's having been its author.

some extent controlled by him; the three other works still bearing his name are lamentable caricatures. It was probably the impression left by works like these that made Velasquez openly declare his indifference to Raphael as a painter.

There is a glamour surrounding the name of Andrea del Sarto: it is usual in estimating this artist to discuss what he might have done if circumstances had benefited him; if he had only been able to combat the adverse chances of his life, and to stand up to his real height. Such discussions make charming endings to well-contrived sentences. The fact is, that Genius moulds circumstances for itself; it is an essential part of Genius to combat what is hostile, and not willingly to yield; it would be more accurate, therefore, to say that, given the lack of passion, sincerity, and conviction which was Sarto's share, it is astonishing that from time to time, perhaps once only in his 'Birth of the Virgin,' he should have challenged comparison with the greatest masters.

Vasari's sympathetic biography, based on acquaintance with the painter when he was his pupil; Vasari's susceptibility to the exterior side of art, his wish to show in Florence a sort of rival to Raphael, has contributed to this. Then Sarto's devotion to a beautiful but soulless wife, whose

influence deprived his art of wings, has in it the fascination of a novel.

We are told that if Sarto is not inspired he is 'senza errori.' The fact is that — born in the small craftsman class that has given Florence the Della Robbias and the Ghirlandaios — like them Sarto is an even and excellent craftsman, resourceful, easy in effort, fertile, self-sufficient, and monotonous. He speaks with the accent of a golden period, but what he has to say, if fluent enough, is also commonplace.

We cannot deny his facility as a draughtsman, though this also is stamped by conformity and pattern: it is full of flourish and vacancy, like his composition.

Of the several works in the Prado attributed to Andrea del Sarto two will detain us. The others belong mainly, like many works of this artist outside Florence, to a class of repetitions, school copies, and lifeless imitations.

The first in date of these two pictures is the damaged but still beautiful portrait of his wife Lucrezia, whom as a woman I have no wish to rehabilitate. There is no reason for Vasari to have greatly exaggerated what might well have been the crude behaviour of this little bourgeoise, who, like so many women who are pretty, or who have once been pretty, neglected her husband.

But to return to the picture. We find here a face that justifies the legend of her beauty — not always justified by other canvases that are reputed to represent this 'Manette Salomon' of the sixteenth century. The picture presents her head and shoulders in a design which echoes an earlier formula in portraiture, as we might find it in Raphael. Despite retouchings, the face looks at the spectator with beautiful eyes, beneath beautiful temples; the mouth and cheeks seem as if for a moment Sarto had remembered the dimpled and subtle surfaces of Leonardo. For once he has endowed a face with a distinction one finds too rarely in his Madonnas, a distinction which we shall notice perhaps only in the rather wistful portraits of himself. Lucrezia, it is true, is here quite a young woman, secure in her charm; there is a whole heaven between this charming face in the Prado and that of the plump pretentious little woman in the Uffizi, or the smug woman at Berlin, also famous as Sarto's wife.

Passing over a repetition of the academic 'Sacrifice of Abraham,' of which the original is at Dresden, we turn to the fine and famous 'Madonna and St. John,' which (catalogued in the Prado 'Asunto Mistico') ranks as one of the finest pictures by Sarto in the world. Here we find his art at its ripest, in a design whose condi-



ANDREA DEL SARTO — THE MADONNA AND ST. JOHN

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tions do not strain his gifts, or reveal his limitations of invention and imagination as do the 'Assunta' of the Pitti, and the 'Madonna and Six Saints' of the same gallery, with which this work is allied in composition and type of models. This picture has been slightly over-cleaned; but it was originally lighter in key and colour scheme than the pictures I have instanced in Florence, which show a similar vein of invention. This requires some explanation, for not only did Sarto paint many repetitions at different times in his career, but figures designed for one picture do duty in others with slight variations only. It is thus that the fine figure of the Virgin at the Prado raises a hand to her veil, which she drops in the 'Madonna and Six Saints' in the Pitti. Sarto's degree of invention and expression in a figure is illustrated by this fact; he required but the raising of a hand, the turn of a head, or the addition of a piece of studio drapery to fulfil his requirements. In the work at the Prado, the figures are more than usually related to each other; we forget the dummy St. John and the posed model doing duty as an angel, in looking at the beautifully invented and posed Madonna, the veiled figure in the background, and the charming landscape. The appearance of the picture is cool and luminous. I think it is over-

cleaned; but most of Sarto's pictures may be placed in one of two classes — those in which the restorer has admired the blond colouring of the frescoes and early pictures, and who forthwith over-cleans, and those in which the more old-fashioned restorer, partial to the *sfumato* of Sarto's later painting, has devoted his whole attention to reproducing it. To this class belong most of the pictures in the Pitti, the 'Disputa' and the 'Annunciation,' for instance.

Sarto 'senza errori' was a facile and accomplished craftsman, indifferent to faults; his drawing is masterly in its self-assurance rather than by any quality of expression or plastic force it may contain. In his work all is calculated for effect — the amply disposed draperies, the academic limbs and hands, the faces watching the spectator out of the corner of their eyes.

Before his work the public is astonished by his effective stage-management; then comes the legend of his blighted life and promise, and the spectator is able to flatter himself that, despite all this easy perfection, Sarto is still lacking, is still below the spectator, flattering thought! So we find clergymen and ladies, guide-book in hand, repeating Sarto Senza Errori; but oh, his lack of wing! how divine his gift, how sad his life! So this nimble academician soothes the dunce and

the Philistine to wondering whether, after all, the greater thought and emotion displayed by the greater masters does not interfere with their message? Is Sarto not even more perfect still? — he is more easy to understand.

Raphael's facility is another legend, but the mistake is of quite another kind. With him the intellectual and artistic nimbleness is of a different order, and moves upon a different plane. So many qualities meet in an astonishing yet equal volume, that an extraordinary effect of unity and ease is the result. His movements have the apparent smoothness in their rapidity we note in an athlete, or in the touch of a panther. All the combining forces are strung to a pitch that would make famous the possessor of one only; nor was this apparent ease in the combination of them due to a mere result of a happy and cultivated nature, 'a mediocrity for once golden,' but the result of an extraordinary will and passion for perfection.

We may sometimes feel out of touch and out of love with Raphael, but with him we are never conscious of vagueness and insufficiency: touch the outer softness of his work, and we feel the pulse of a tremendous vitality.

I am inclined to think that the stress of his faculties wore out the physical man, that he worked towards the end, dominated by the variety

and copiousness of his gifts, whilst the faculty to assimilate from others still heightened the strain upon his nature. A nature outwardly sweet and grave as of one who moves under orders, sweet in his gravity as a man who was perhaps a little tired as the days grew few, the hands thin, and the effort immense even for a Raphael underneath the shadow of that height which was Michael Angelo.

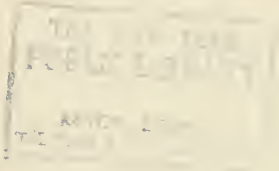
Sarto is not a Raphael — he moves under no such stress and in no such company. He works constantly to make money for his ill-managed household. He fails through no impossible effort, he is easy and equable in his art; he was liked by his friends, admired without passion, and praised to the full — with a touch of pity; 'he did so love his wife.'

Correggio's picture the 'Noli Me Tangere' belongs to the period between 1522 and 1524; he was by then in full possession of his great if unequal faculties. The subject as he has treated it reveals his habitual current of emotion and thought; it is characterised by that tender and almost playful aspect which, considering the subject, will make it delightful to some but repellent to others.

If we remember the subject as it is described in the Gospels, we see in imagination the apparition



CORREGGIO. — NOLI ME TANGERE



of the Master to the Magdalene, in the half light of a troubled dawn; against this we can imagine the outlines of the crosses beyond the garden in which is the tomb we know to be empty. To the reader of Scripture there seems in the record of the event itself something ominous and spectral. To one to whom the vagueness and awe of Christ's apparitions after death have always had a strong and dramatic appeal, one artist only in the world could do justice to this theme, — Rembrandt as an old man. To some this picture of Correggio will therefore seem incomprehensible, irrelevant, almost irreverent. Correggio has given us what looks like a tender and enchanting idyll. We have the dawn, the rich moist tangle of the garden, the delighted ecstasy of the Magdalene.

The picture has almost a pagan sense of ease and happiness. It is thus that Vertumnus might have revealed himself to the happy Pomona. Of the legendary circumstances, all that remains is the vase of perfume Mary Magdalene was bearing to the tomb in memory of that other one she had broken in the house of Levi; at the feet of Christ is the gardener's hoe, hinting at the disguise He wore that the love of those whom He had loved might pierce through it.

In its original state this picture must have been one of the most fortunate and typical works by

the artist. Vasari speaks of its wonderful mellowness, but unfortunately it has suffered greatly by restoration and repainting. The over-cleaning has deprived the bright green landscape of its connecting glazes. The sky of white and mauve, whilst finely designed, is entirely modern; its clear-cut quality against the over-blue horizon and the trees leaves one in no doubt. The figures show ugly patches of restoration: the blue draperies of Christ and the tree-trunk behind the arm display also a harsh colour and spongy texture in the paint which point to repainting. We must in imagination envelop the picture in greater mystery, give the colours a more broken quality, more depth also and more reticence, to realise how exquisite this painting must have been, which still fascinates us in spite of its rather harsh appearance and eighteenth-century scale of colour. Harsh in colour, in pigment too soft, such is its condition. We can praise the feather-like trees, the depth of the woodland, from which emerges the hill against the sky. The figures are conceived in a mood of self-absorption, as if fascinated by their emotions, though perfectly related to each other by gesture and pose. The moment has been caught, we imagine the few words spoken, and the apparition that moves so softly will soon have gone, leaving the Magdalene

still kneeling in the moss of this enchanted place.

The small Madonna with the infant Christ and St. John, No. 135 in the long gallery, where it would seem to have darkened, is a genuine if unimportant work of Correggio, belonging to the class of picture the master executed immediately after he had outgrown his first manner. It ranks therefore with a series of somewhat indefinite Holy Families (such as the feeble 'Madonna and St. Jerome' at Hampton Court) and the noble and singularly grave picture of the 'Riposo' (in the Tribune of the Uffizi), with whose scheme of colour and lighting it has a marked affinity. Though in a good state of preservation, it is not important in effort or intention; it is one of those casual works for which Correggio was probably paid a mere pittance, and in which his creative faculties and great originality as a draughtsman and colourist are hardly revealed. The other works in the gallery under his name are old copies of well-known originals.

What with Vandalism and neglect and admiration, few painters have suffered so gravely as Correggio. Of his fresco work, that which is not crumbling daily away lies hid under the plastering brush of the restorer. Repainting or flaying has been the lot of nearly all his most famous pictures.

If those the gods love die young, certainly the pictures the world has loved greatly die young also, killed by kindness; none has suffered more in this matter than Correggio, unless it is Raphael, the best-loved name in art.

Parmigianino figures in a fine portrait group; Anselmi is absent. Correggio's best imitator, Baroccio, the brilliant Umbrian eclectic, figures in the Gallery of the Prado in one work only, a 'Nativity,' of which there exists a less brilliant replica in the Ambrosiana. The Carraccis, judging by the work put down to them in the Prado, hardly show those signs of power one has a tendency to underrate. The eclectic and decadent painter-engraver Castiglione is represented by five pictures of unequal if undoubted power and freshness, but the Italian school in the Prado is represented mainly by the series of Venetian canvases. Apart from these we can praise a Fra Angelico and two Raphaels that are perfect of their kind, also a Correggio of exquisite quality. We hasten past the eclectics and decadents. We have the marvellous series of Titians before us, and a Giorgione, — a perfect feast; for the strength of the Prado lies, if not entirely in the Venetians, so nearly so that I had almost written it down in forgetfulness of Velasquez, Rubens, and Van Dyck.

CHAPTER VII

THE EARLY VENETIANS IN THE PRADO

To appreciate the Bellini we have to visit the north of Italy: this is the case also with Carpaccio, with Tintoretto, and to some extent with Veronese; — though we can glean almost as good an impression of the last from works scattered in the museums of Europe. If the Prado collection alone survived, enough of Titian's work would be left to justify his name, to show what his art and influence have been: it is to be regretted, however, that this collection is so poor in his forerunners. We have, by common consent, a Giorgione, it is true; but of those admirable masters, the brothers Bellini and Carpaccio, there is nothing. The picture attributed to Bellini, and bearing his authentic signature on its cartellino, is a school variation of the almost miraculous 'Madonna between Ursula and Mary Magdalene' in the Academia in Venice, one of the most lovable pictures by this great and lovable master. The Prado copy is more amply spaced than the original;

it is also totally and grossly cross-hatched and re-painted.

Near to this hangs a work by Catena attributed to Basaiti, the assistant of Bellini — a sort of Holy Conversation piece in which Christ gives the keys to Peter in the presence of Faith and Charity, impersonated by two charming blonde Venetians. Of this picture a finer version exists, enhanced by a bright sky; this was exhibited at Burlington House many years ago, and lent, if my memory does not deceive me, by Herr Richter, the eminent critic.

Leaving the school of Bellini, we come to the picture of the 'Virgin and Child between St. Anthony and St. Rocco,' which Giovanni Morelli was the first to identify as a work by Giorgione.

Giorgione's influence upon art is so great that his name conjures up a series of impressions even more stimulating and significant than the few actual works of his which have come down to us, and we say 'the Giorgionesque' when we wish to specify an attitude in art which has remained fascinating and stimulating — an attitude difficult to translate into words, so potent is it by its suggested purpose and charm, so intense yet playful in its curious blending of passion and repose.

A study of the paintings of Carpaccio reveals



GIORGIONE. — THE VIRGIN AND CHILD BETWEEN ST. ANTHONY AND ST. ROCCO

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to us how far Venetian painting had played with its subject-matter, making of its pictures, by the digression of a delightful fancy, something more than mere illustrations. We find in the prints of Jacopo de Barbari not only playful half-pagan motives 'as if suggested by cameos,' but the use of compositional conventions which were to become part of Giorgione's habits of arrangement. But these possibilities have been so surpassed by Giorgione that we may acquiesce at once in the estimate of his contemporaries, who saw in those first playful pictures and paintings for virginal cases and cassones, taken from romances and from Ovid, a manifestation of a new mood in art, the inauguration of a new manner — the advent, in fact, to Venice of the very spirit of the Renaissance.

Beyond the few meagre details we have of his romantic birth and death — now mostly controverted — there remains the testimony that his was a personality of great charm. His nickname Giorgione — 'Great George' — is itself a record of the affection with which he was regarded by his friends for his handsome looks, his various gifts; and since only a few of the many works under his name are actually by him, he was probably ready with assistance to others. His was a personality gifted with a stimulating influence

upon his fellow-men, a focus of new experimental thought in art — in marked contrast in this respect to his elder contemporaries, who were still tied down to a sort of routine in practice, in education, in life, and in thought.

I think that if we turn for a moment to Rosetti and his influence in England upon his contemporaries, or upon men slightly his juniors, such as Burne-Jones and Morris, we have something analogous in the wave of luminous thought, caught, refracted, and developed beyond its initial impulse perhaps, and touching other men, those even who were not actually inside the circle or peculiarly apt to understand: and we note in the influence of the founder of the æsthetic movement in England something not unlike the influence of Barbarelli in Venice — an influence of suggestion, an influence making towards the expression of personality and the worship of beauty.

Giorgione appears to us, however, greater as a personality and as a stimulus upon others than as an artist. This is proved by the character of his existing works, round which still clings an air of facility and experiment, as if they had been done for the pleasure of a few friends. His life was a brilliant one. Fond of pleasure, beloved by women, he died at the age of thirty-four,

leaving the impression of one even younger than his years, and, in the art of painting, that of youth with its gracious intensity, its privilege, and its charm.

We are able to form some idea of the ' poesies '— those spirited little paintings for the decoration of furniture (illustrating romances or using the motives from romances as the theme of pictorial improvisation) — from ' The Ordeal by Fire ' and the ' Wisdom of Solomon,' both in the Uffizi; the ' Gipsy Family ' so called, and the authentic ' Adoration of the Magi,' in London.

The marvellous ' Christ bearing the Cross ' (once at Vicenza, now one of the gems of the Gardner collection at Boston), and above all, the undisputed altar-piece at Castelfranco, show how far Giorgione resembled or differed from Bellini, in the treatment of subjects allied to his in aim and scale: how far he had found it possible to realise that larger manner he sought, and that greater fusion in tone and colour, in works painted under the old conditions, but with a new sense of spaciousness, and a more winning or romantic approach than that of earlier masters.

The ' Æneas and Evander ' at Vienna is a work in which all are agreed in recognising a picture said to be finished by Sebastiano del Piombo after Giorgione's death. We have here a work

put on one side: one anterior not only to the 'Madonna' at Madrid, and the 'Venus' at Dresden (both late and unfinished works), but also to the more fantastically conceived designs which Giorgione painted with Titian on the Fondaco de' Tedeschi, of which we possess a faint record in the prints by Zanetti, done in the eighteenth century, before time had reduced these famous works to a few patches.[1]

Vasari praised a 'David' in armour with the head of Goliath, by Giorgione, which has now been recognised in an old copy at Vienna. This picture bears upon the authorship of a famous if disputed Giorgione identified by Morelli, known as the 'Shepherd with a Pipe,' at Hampton Court. In this work, the head with its beautiful oval, the tender fusion of its tones, and a certain hesitation in the construction and contour of the skull, point to Giorgione as its author; though the nondescript draperies, and the hand, painted in a later technique, seem the patching of a restorer.[2] As a matter of fact, hand, flute, and drapery are

[1] Mr. Claude Phillips has recently attributed to Giorgione a 'Judith' at St. Petersburg, once in the Crozat collection, where it passed as a Raphael; and from this we may form a better idea of the character of the lost decorations.

[2] The restorer probably had in mind the 'Sebastian' (63) at Vienna, in which we recognise the head of a boy holding an arrow in his hand, after Giorgione, which the Anonimo saw in the house of Messer Giovanni Ram.

all spurious and ingenious additions painted over a suit of armour, the rim of which still shows above the shirt; and underneath this we can trace the details of the breastplate, in an impasto only partly concealed by these spurious additions. I think these facts point to the picture's being a fragment of the original 'David,' turned to account by some late dealer or picture restorer.

Passing over the disputed point — too complicated to go into here — of the number and the artistic value of Giorgione's portraits as they have come down to us, and putting aside the world-famous 'Concert' of the Louvre, we come to two pictures left unfinished at the master's death — the 'Madonna enthroned between St. Anthony and St. Rocco' at Madrid, and the 'Venus' at Dresden (finished by Titian). The first picture concerns us most, as it is the single work of his in which we find the same freedom of touch, and the same delicate pigment as in the miraculous 'Concert Champêtre' in the Louvre.

The composition of the Madrid picture reveals that love of telling 'pattern' which we note in the pictures of Giorgione, and that tendency to see his figures unrelated to each other, self-absorbed as if in a delicate train of thought. The Madonna sits enthroned against a curtain, in a scheme of picture upon whose design the 'Ma-

donna and Doge ' by Bellini at Murano may have had a forming influence, though the result is different enough. The figure of St. Anthony, the gracious pose of the Madonna, the freedom and foreshortening of the drawing of the child, with the upward turn of the face, all point to an advance in ease upon earlier pictures. This is further illustrated by the ripe, pliant, and delicate pigment, the evidence of improvisation upon the canvas itself, by an artist able to recast or rehandle at will, and who has discarded the mere painting in glazes in which the practice of painting till then had mainly consisted.

Typical of Giorgione is the fortunate use of a piece of white brocade, which he places against the head of the Virgin as a ' note ' in the design. Typical of Giorgione is the long sweep of the Virgin's dress. Typical of his mode of invention is the unexpected presence of a fragment of marble, upon which St. Rocco rests his foot.

The touch is more crisp and broken than even Titian's before he painted the ' Noli Me Tangere ' of the National Gallery; the draperies are here and there broadly outlined with revisions and contours of black, and a species of cross-hatching such as we find in Dürer.

The attraction of the picture lies in its effect of unpremeditation, its delicate, light key, and an

intense underlying sense of beauty, which transcends the occasion. This is an element in the nature of the artist himself, a mood in the approach of his art.

This is perhaps not the work of a man to whom all the finest things are possible, but to whom certain lesser things are impossible; the picture holds this gift of persuasion as a flower holds its perfume. There is something in it which is more than the mere daintiness — something which is not tenderness only in the poise of the Virgin's head and hands, and the turn of the head in the St. Anthony. (This figure and the more casual St. Rocco are still unfinished, and the first is in part effaced as if for revision.)

On the evidence of his best and most authentic works, Giorgione is a born painter, drawn by his imagination and his temperament into fields in which nothing then in Venice could assist him. The more elaborate method of Bellini was too static, insufficient to clothe the more gracious forms and the larger masses sought by Giorgione, or to convey the mobile and fugitive qualities that haunted him. His art, as it has come down to us, is often experimental; a sensitive and delicate brush pencils in the forms and details that conform to a charming pattern of the world he has evolved, with its graceful slopes, feathery

trees, and intense horizons. His human type is refined and sensitive, conceived usually in a mood of self-absorption, or as if turning away from the knot of the dramatic situation or event. To Titian, much that with Giorgione was only tentative or lightly indicated, became a point of departure in the development of a nature which was different, — richer, more balanced and self-possessed, more steady from the first in its range and outlook, more dramatic, and perhaps more genuinely passionate.

I think we may dismiss the legend of the estrangement between the two friends, Giorgione and Titian, as only partly true, since Titian was practically Giorgione's executor; — though like many legends it has a sort of poetic justice (or rather poetic injustice) about it, which brings very close to us that intense moment in Venetian life when art and the love of beauty had become sufficient ends in themselves — were looked upon not merely as means to fuller and intenser life, but, like happiness, as things in themselves desirable, even necessary.

CHAPTER VIII

TITIAN AND HIS PICTURES IN THE PRADO

The Prado is famous for its series of pictures by Titian, and his name is one of the greatest in the history of art. With Titian a phase of artistic development finds its definite expression, and the result remains stimulating and suggestive, yet unsurpassable. Nor does his greatness consist merely in the possession of peculiar or isolated gifts, as does that of many great painters: — his genius, in contact with the world, has an all-pervading power of approach, like the light or the air.

Titian was a passionate spectator of life; yet through his unique gift of vision, he became a creative artist also. Spectator and creator at once (creative in the constructive habit of his mood), Titian's faculties of representation do not spring from some preconceived scheme of things, but from the ordering of certain facts into a sequence coloured by the richness of his own nature. It is by his power of marshalling his

impressions, and by the nobility of his aim, that he has made a world of his own. It is through this constructive genius of his that he ranks among the great creative artists of the past.

Without men like Titian — without the gift of his experience — our faculties of observation would be less, our faculties of emotion less responsive, our experience the poorer.

The world has recognised its debt to him, in praising that obvious gift of colour which he displays; but this one faculty only formed part in a harmonious balance of gifts, and his colour is so dependent upon the marshalling of light and mass that it merely intensifies the emotions which we receive from his pictures and from their subject-matter. Titian's temperament gains strength and ease when brought into contact with the actual; beyond this he only occasionally moves. His brush does not falter under the weight of his discoveries as did Rembrandt's, nor is his painting at once abstract yet concise like Raphael's, nor does he breathe a superhuman air like Michael Angelo. Titian's art was verily of this world, but his approach was that of one privileged as a thinker and as a spectator, and no generation has questioned his achievement or his rank as an artist.

Titian was born at Cadore in 1477; he died at

Venice in 1576. The account of his early youth and of his first arrival at Venice has been given by Crowe and Cavalcaselle, whose researches have so far remained final in these matters. In their life of Titian, we find sifted and analysed all the ascertainable facts about his first years of apprenticeship — facts that are of little importance after all when we turn from them to his art, as it is revealed even in his earliest works.

Giovanni Morelli has added the weight of his opinion to the theory that Gentile Bellini, and not his brother Giovanni, was Titian's master; the suggestion made by Crowe and Cavalcaselle that he may well have studied under each in succession gives a likely solution to the problem. The important thing is that Titian became later the pupil or assistant of Giorgione, and founded his early manner upon that of his friend.

Such early works as the 'Man of Sorrows' in the Scuola di S. Rocco, attributed to Titian by common consent rather than upon any conclusive evidence; the small 'Virgin' in the possession of Mr. R. Benson; the 'Zingarella' and the 'Tambourine Player,' at Vienna; these, and the 'Herodias' at Rome, are Giorgionesque works, in temper, in design, and in quality of pigment. In these pictures the treatment of the form and drapery is still tentative and cautious.

It is usual to place among the earliest works of Titian the now famous picture in Antwerp, the 'Baffo in Adoration at the Feet of St. Peter Enthroned.' This assumption is based on a sentiment: it is supposed that after the death of the infamous Pope Borgia, no one would care to be associated with him even in a picture; but it is difficult to gauge the public opinion or the private feelings of another period. A study of the work in question shows that though it is still marked in part by early influences, it also shows a technical assertion and details of invention which anticipate that keener sense of realism that distinguishes Titian from Giorgione; — such as we find it in Titian's masterpieces in the Giorgionesque mood, the 'Concert' in the Pitti, and the 'Sacred and Profane Love': works in which Titian is no longer the disciple of Giorgione, but the inheritor and master of the mood in art inaugurated by him.

Crowe and Cavalcaselle, by what is, in the opinion of the present writer, an unaccountable slip of judgment, have put down the painting of the 'Sacred and Profane Love' to the first years of Titian's career. This is (if I may use a modern illustration for comparison) as if Rossetti had painted the 'Lady Lilith' before he had designed the 'Ecce Ancilla Domini.' The 'Sacred and

Profane Love ' belongs, in fact, to a series executed by Titian after his return from Padua, later than his quite Giorgionesque frescoes there. It belongs to a series of broadly designed pictures like the altar-piece in the Salute, the ' Baptism of Christ ' in the Capitoline Gallery at Rome, the ' Three Ages of Man,' the ' Noli Me Tangere '; and like all these works, the ' Sacred and Profane Love ' exhibits a bolder and more rhythmic scheme of composition, a broader method of painting, and a more realistic and central mood. In the type of models, and in the cast of draperies, this picture falls into line with that series of more broadly designed panels such as the ' Vanitas,' the ' Conversation ' at Dresden, and the ' Flora.' We may therefore place the ' Sacred and Profane Love ' at a date not earlier than 1512; it was probably painted in the following three years.

A few facts confirm the order in which I have ventured to group these well-known pictures by Titian. In his earliest pictures, such as the ' Zingarella,' the design is still Giorgionesque, still seen behind a ledge as it were, still like a bas-relief in pattern or design; the shadows are still obtained by superimposed glazes; the draperies are arranged and studied as still-life, they as yet have no character and freedom of their own. In Titian's ' Herodias ' at Rome, the draperies also

fall with timidity, and the work is distinguished from the 'Herodias' by Piombo (dated 1510) only by a more exquisite quality of colour and surface, not by any greater vitality or power of conveying motion and relief.

A new set of details and a new choice of models form small connecting links between the works Titian painted after his stay at Padua in 1511. In the landscape which he added to the 'Venus' by Giorgione at Dresden, we notice a similar farm and tree which we find beyond the hill in the 'Three Ages': the same model does duty for the shepherd in this latter picture, and for the St. John in the 'Baptism' at Rome. The same farmhouse I have instanced in the 'Venus' figures again in the exquisite 'Noli Me Tangere,' which is one of the gems of the Natural Gallery, London.

In the 'Three Ages of Man,' the 'Sacred and Profane Love,' and the 'Vanitas,' we find the first instances of that florid blonde type which Palma Vecchio has exploited. In these pictures we notice increasing movement in the figures and draperies, increasing largeness in the treatment of sky and flesh; above all, the method of painting is more solid and direct. There is more impasto, less shading by mere over-glazes, than in Giorgione; an ever-increasing naturalness or freedom



TITIAN. — THE MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ST. BRIDGET AND ST. HULFUS

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in design, even fresh tricks in the use of costume, may be noted; — the gradual introduction of the crimson petticoat and white shirt, the grey dress with large sleeves which has now superseded the contemporary costumes at Padua. These all point to habits of arrangement not less significant than the increasing breadth in lighting the larger spaces of flesh — improvements in the practice of his art such as every painter has to evolve gradually, and which Titian was the first to discover.

The Prado is fortunate in the possession of one of Titian's canvases in which we still see his debt to Giorgione. This picture, the 'Madonna and Child with St. Bridget and St. Hulfus,' is rich in effect of colour, and sustained in pigment, if still cautious. The Virgin is of that somewhat matronly type which we find in Titian's early work; the diagonal tilt forward of the head is characteristic of his early habits of invention. One feels the stress upon Titian's power of the scale on which the work is done. The head of St. Hulfus is full of life and animation; the brown skin, gleaming armour, and fine hair show a sort of ardent refinement — a touch of the *fuoco Giorgionesco*. Beyond the curtain is a patch of intense blue sky with a large cloud.

A delightful intensity of key in the colour of

the picture, despite a few patches and re-touches, carries off the rather casual scheme of design, in which the figures appear suddenly brought together, with a certain picturesque effect, but without that deeper sense of rhythmic composition which we admire in works such as the 'Noli Me Tangere' and the 'Sacred and Profane Love.' The restorer has left his mark, as usual, upon the flesh of the blonde female saint.

With the relations of Titian with the court of Ferrara we find also that broadening and deepening of his gifts, as an artist and as a painter, which culminate in the most central expression of his art, the 'Bacchus and Ariadne,' — a picture finished in 1523, when the painter was a man of forty-six, famous as an artist and confident in his gift.

From the painting of the 'Garden of Loves' (commissioned before 1518) and the 'Bacchanal' at Madrid onward, we have works of such importance as the altar-piece at Brescia, the 'Bacchus and Ariadne,' and the 'Casa Pesaro' altar-piece — works at once splendid in conception and splendid in execution — works full of a passionate delight in 'the truth of outward things,'[1] which, as I have said before, formed the very confession of faith of the Renaissance.

[1] This pregnant phrase is not mine, it belongs to Machiavelli.

We have seen that Titian's relation with the court of Ferrara was marked by an intensifying of his faculties, and by the realisation of works in which the tide of secular thought beats high. It is at this time that we find Titian free from the thraldom of the Madonna, Babe, and Saint, which he had coloured in the past with a certain graciousness of aspect rather than with any particular intensity, originality, or even conviction. The 'Assunta' itself comes more as an expression of an ecstatic sense of joy and motion than as a confession of religious enthusiasm. Till Titian was an old man we can well believe that religion was for him the expression of a gracious habit, not a cast of thought. The pulse for fine realities beat strong in his fibre and blood; and he has handled pagan themes as if beauty and a strong sense of delight were sufficient in themselves. Look back as we may at the daring or whimsical or experimental excursions of the Tuscans into pagan conditions of thought, at the very moment when even Christianity as a force hung in the balance, we do not find that perfect naturalness and ease, that naïveté of perception which Titian shows in his instinctive paganism. The pagan spirit of the Renaissance found in the unintellectual and slumbering Venice an exponent untrammelled by that older intel-

lectual inheritance which had in Florence produced Savonarola. The comfortable Venetian use and wont, modified by policy and trade, was insufficient to oppose the new pagan fashion when at last it touched Venice — or rather there was no necessity for opposition. The sincere piety of a Bellini was the stamp of a man of the craftsman caste, not an intellectual assertion. The love of the beautiful for its own sake, and of the antique as a new secret of success, found Titian's nature perfectly receptive; he does not play delicately with religious motives as themes for artistic improvisation as did Giorgione; till he was seventy he welcomed Christ Himself as one in a pantheon of gracious forces and personalities. The 'Cristo della Moneta' has the mansuetude of the Master who turned water into wine, or the friend in the house of Martha and Mary; he has not the force of the thaumaturgus and seer.

A steady aptitude for beauty and delight enables Titian, on the other hand, to touch the slightest classical motives without either the silliness and slightness, or the ingenuity, which we find latent in the subjects themselves. A knowledge of the literary conceit at the back of the 'Three Ages of Man' would merely astonish, not interest us. With Titian a word picture of Philostratus yields no less a work than the 'Garden of Loves,' at

the Prado. Reminiscences from the same source, — a line or two from Catullus, — give us the 'Bacchus and Ariadne': the hackneyed literary phrase, 'turning the water into purple' is enough, — and we find the rivulet of wine that trickles through the 'Bacchanal,' as the charming central motive of a work which breathes an ever constant sense of deep delight.

Tradition has associated Ariosto with the invention of the two famous 'poesies' now at Madrid; a similar source may have suggested the making of the 'Venus with the Shell' at Bridgewater House, with its manifest attempt to emulate the 'Venus' of Apelles.[1]

The 'Garden of Loves,' the 'Bacchanal,' and the 'Bacchus and Ariadne' were amongst those fine things which Michael Angelo saw and praised at the Court of Ferrara, together with a portrait now unfortunately lost. Together they form what may be called Titian's confession of faith as an artist. Group with these some four portraits, and there would be enough to give Titian his rank. All the superb and eventful pictures he painted afterwards add indeed to his powers of influence and testify to his resource; they

[1] The character of the design, the character of the contour and facial type, make it impossible that this damaged picture should date later than 1520; it is probably the picture of 'a bath' mentioned in the letter to the Duke of Ferrara, Feb 19, 1517.

express variously, but they do not intensify, the unique qualities of vision and temper that he brought to the art of making pictures.

Time and the restorer have dealt ill with the two canvases at the Prado, — shorn the 'Garden of Loves' of its shape, and done badly by the tender glazes and final surfaces of the pictures. Of the two, however, the 'Garden of Loves' is the less damaged; though it is deprived of a last thin connecting glaze, and the painting of the crowd of dear little rogues is left a little monotonous. The stippler and restorer have been at work, leaving mauve patches on little legs, little arms, and little bellies. The sky is thrown out of key by repainting, and repainting has altered the statue to the foolish thing we see in the reproduction.

Within the texture of the picture itself and the general colour scheme, — which is bright, like the 'flayed' 'Madonna and the Shepherd' in the National Gallery, and fresh in pitch, like the 'Three Ages of Man,' — we find enchanting pieces of workmanship that have the edge and crisp tender quality of a petal or a shell. Tiny hands, tiny ears, the light caught on a space of flesh, the crisp tempera painting of the draperies, have an indescribable beauty of texture, — though they do not show the variety, lustre, and



TITIAN. — THE GARDEN OF LOVES

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subtlety of some of the details in the 'Bacchus and Ariadne,' which Titian painted a few years later.

The subject itself has no particular significance of charm in Philostratus; there it is elaborately descriptive and ingenious: we find, as in most literary picture painting, great insistence upon minute details, and a description of the intentions of the actors.

The 'Garden of Loves' fascinates us by something unexpected; the picture is all surprise and movement. One is reminded of the eager, greedy movements of bees about flowers, the flutter of birds pilfering thistledown; the memory is charmed by hints and recollections of pleasant things; we watch the picture as we might watch a heap of apples being tumbled from a basket, or the foolish motions of pigeons on a lawn. The quaint seriousness and naïve selfishness of children busy with themselves are there, but without their petty eagerness; the picture is all summer; one thinks of the rustle among the leaves, of apples rolling down a slope, of laughter heard in a neighbouring field. One admires the skill with which the blue of the sky has been carried through the scheme of the picture in the blue wings of the little cherubs. One forgets the skill and originality displayed in the work, under the ease and

apparent spontaneity it shows in invention. This and the neighbouring work, the 'Bacchanal,' have been pattern pictures ever since, copied and imitated by Rubens and Poussin.

Yet more beautiful is the 'Bacchanal' as a work of even greater importance and originality. It is sadly flayed and in part damaged, stippled, and repainted. Some of the repainting, judging by its appearance in the good light in which the picture now hangs, might still be removed; but unfortunately the local and connecting glazes have been tampered with. The violets in the bosom of the central figure are no longer purple, but a bright blue; this points to the drastic skinning of the rest; but despite the terribly repainted sky and the damage done to portions on the left-hand side of the picture, the conception and massing of the work remain, and there are still inimitable pieces of direct, crisp, and structural painting on spaces of flesh, hair, draperies, hands, ears, and tender scraps of linen, done in a way known only to Titian.

I do not think that originally the work showed the depth, lustre, and transparency of the 'Bacchus and Ariadne'; it was doubtless less mature and resourceful in technique, nearer in method to the genuine 'Madonna and Donor' at Munich, and the 'Three Ages of Man.' The



TITIAN. — THE BACCHANAL

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reproduction or photograph conveys the beauty of the design, and we can reconstruct for ourselves the more mysterious play of tone and colour which the restorer has partly removed; those magical gleamings of warm colour through cool, cool through warm; the fascinating evasiveness of a contour or form known or divined inside a liquid shadow — in fact, those endless amendments and sacrifices of fact and workmanship which belong to the practice of the greatest painters only, and which the more emphatic and summary modern point of view will not face.

The stimulating freshness in the arrangement of the colours has remained; all the skill with which they are woven into pattern, all that the marshalling of mass and line can do: and we have in this work for ever the poignant sense of beauty, the passion and the repose so inextricably blent; the fugitive mood, caught, held, and understood for ever; realisation without satiety; ardour and a rich ease.

Some ingenuity has been displayed in guessing the subject of this revel. At the horizon a ship looms large — it is perhaps the ship of Theseus! Is the woman wrapped in a passion of sleep Ariadne, still unknowing of her loss? I think that, utilising the subject to hand merely as a hint, Titian has let his mind run riot, and with

it his brush. On the hill-top we see the grapes crushed beneath the weight of a Polyphemus-like figure: from the grapes issues the rivulet of wine which is the central motive of the work. By this sit two fair Venetians: the fairer one leans towards her companion, and from their hands a pipe has slipped. Crouched at her feet, with his hands clasping her very ankles, is the brown, ardent figure of a man who turns towards the other revellers, who are all absorbed — one in the wine he holds in a crystal flask against the sky; whilst others, wrapped in the mazes of a dance, move at once passionate and listless, inclining for the moment towards each other when hand touches hand. Others bend over the cup or bring salt for the wine, or bear wine away in jars. Beyond, the vines flash white among the trees at the horizon, and the season and the hour ripen. The love of beauty emanates from the very motive and substance of this work, as the perfume emanates from the flesh of a peach or the cells in a bunch of violets.

Here is shadow, and here is light, and passion and repose: — the crisp edge of the sea against the coast. Creatures of the myths, fauns, brown, shaggy, and friendly, are present at this truce between nature and the world.

The habits of daily life have brought flask, dish, lute, the very scrap of paper on which we see '*Chi boit et ne reboit, ne çais què boir soit,*' and a little wave of notes. The two women revellers are modern Venetians; in the folds of the linen shift of one we see, among some violets, the edge of a love-letter on which Titian has written his name. Yet, regardless of all these things and of the hum of the revel, we have the abstracted figure of the bacchante asleep — white, motionless, and entranced, dominating the design: the blood may seem to mantle to a face, and the wine rush into the hollow cavern of a cup: let Silenus gobble his wine, the singer or the dancer continue thus for ever; whilst this canvas lasts the painter and the art-lover will wonder at this masterpiece of the heyday of art, done in the June and July of our civilisation — this symbol of a time when strength and beauty were one, when life and art were one, and time and change themselves were viewed as guests at a revel.

In 1526 Titian completed his 'Casa Pesaro' altar-piece — still obscured and degraded by neglect and by its squalid surroundings in the Frari at Venice.

Aretino's arrival in Venice, and his connection with Titian, mark a new phase in the painter's relations with the outer world, which may well

in the long-run have influenced, not the quality, but the trend of his work.

The year 1530 saw the triumphant completion of the now lost 'Peter Martyr,' in which Titian's contemporaries recognised, not merely his challenge to the grand manner, but the climax of his work. During these years, in which Titian painted other masterpieces also, there is no sign of the harmful influence of Aretino: later on, the loss of a certain nimbleness and fire, the partial coarsening of temper, should be attributed to the natural effect of years upon a man who has said his say, and to the gradual pressure of the outer world.

To the writer, the peculiar essence of Titian's earlier work is its youthfulness; the conditions of its expression require the untarnished faculties for perception and the nimble physical response of youth. If Titian was forty-six when he painted the 'Bacchus and Ariadne,' his youth had been greatly prolonged. We must, therefore, not be surprised if after 1530 we have no canvases like the 'Sacred and Profane Love,' or the 'Bacchanal,' or the 'Bacchus and Ariadne':— the last was done at an age when men are no longer young, but have usually changed in their mental fibre, in their aims and their view of life. An indiscreet questioner once asked Millais why

he had abandoned the mood in which he had painted the 'Ophelia' and the 'St. Agnes' Eve,' and W. Morris why he had written nothing else in the vein of the 'Defence of Queen Guinevere,' and was answered by both in almost identical words — 'A man can't go on doing that sort of thing all his life.' Titian's answer to a similar question might have been the same.

Titian doubtless welcomed Aretino for the worldly charm of the scamp himself, whose reputation was largely due to his assertions of his own wickedness — since taken on trust. The divine Aretino, the 'Scourge of Princes,' has been wittily described by Mr. Claude Phillips as less the 'scourge' than the 'screw' of princes. There is no need for further conjecture. Aretino's manners were doubtless better than his morals; he was a good friend, and, as an enemy, he seems more than once to have got more harm than he gave.

Titian's art had passed its summer when he first came into contact with the Spanish court; but in the pictures he painted from 1547 to the time of his death we have a prolonged and rich autumn season. His faculty as a portrait painter never for a moment declines; and if in his mid-career he gave us those somewhat heavy yet golden and glorious pictures we see mainly in

Florence — those opulent Magdalenes, Urbino Venuses, Danaës, — from the date of the visit to Rome onwards the lover of pictures will find sufficient variety of effort, sufficient quality in output, sufficient passion and painter's emotion, to make us forget several other canvases which even in the opinion of his contemporaries were not of his best — which are not by the Titian one reveres and loves.

The painter's output between 1530 and 1545 includes such masterpieces as the 'Charles v. with a Dog' at the Prado; the 'Ippolito de Medici'; the somewhat overrated 'St. Giovanni Elemosinario'; the portraits of the Duke of Urbino and his wife; the now lost 'Battle of Cadore'; the totally ruined and repainted 'Presentation' in the Academia in Venice; the altarpiece of Verona, which is magnificent in part; and the repainted and now unrecognisable ceilings at the Salute, in which we find him exercising his powers in a field other than his own.

Titian is now, if still a solicitor for emoluments and payments in a period when ready money was a real problem, the painter whose pictures are prized and famous: they count as presents and bribes. His arrival at Rome in 1545, where Vasari himself became his cicerone, establishes his supremacy at the pole of art opposite to that

practised by Michael Angelo — the 'Divine Michael Angelo,' as Titian is now the 'Incomparable Titian,' to use contemporary phrases.

We can still admire at the Prado Titian's portrait of Charles v. in white. In conception it is one of the finest portraits in the world; the tranquil simple bearing of this most tired of men remains as a thing which touches at once our imagination and our sympathy. We feel in this presence the dignity born of things done and suffered — their power to mould and refine a human face. There is a touch of homeliness in the large hound which has crept up to be caressed, a touch of refinement in the carriage of the hands. Charles is here every inch a man made noble by his experience. Did Charles, who was said to be ill-favoured, look thus? or is this a broader and finer version of his personality than that which the man revealed at any single moment of his life? Who can tell? — the picture remains one of Titian's triumphs. As a painting it is quiet, almost timid in workmanship. The whites of the dress are enlivened by the delicate embroideries of gold; white, green, black, and a little brown, these are the dominating colours; there is no telling massing of lights and shadows about the face: the art throughout is marked by a great restraint. We might place at the

opposite pole to this fine work the splendid and exuberant presentment of Aretino, the adventurer: yet in both, as in all Titian's portraits, whatever be the character of the sitter, he is enveloped by an isolating atmosphere which is coloured by the generous gravity of Titian's own temper.

No artist, however objective, is able to eliminate his personality from his portraits — be he Franz Hals, who swaggers, or Goya, who is nervous, irritable, and unbalanced. We are grateful, therefore, to Titian for the dignity of his presentment, underlying the magisterial quality of his art: he has also given us the greatest variety in type, and shown the greatest insight of any portrait painter. The more analytical art of Rembrandt, even, has too personal a bent, most of his portraits reminding one of the painter himself. Velasquez, who is nearer Titian in gravity or steadiness of aim, had no such chances, and was also a man of slighter intellectual build and slighter artistic resource. The 'Charles V.' and the 'Philip II.' are among Titian's chief assets as a portrait painter. It may be noted that, though separated by several years, each shows in its way an unfailing dignity and reticence, all the more valuable in royal portraits, which are generally made an excuse for lack of these qualities.

The picture of Del Vasto addressing his troops,

commonly known as the 'Allocution,' need hardly detain us. Painted in the middle of his career, like the lost series of the Cæsars, the lost 'Battle of Cadore,' and the 'Ecce Homo' at Vienna, it belongs to a more conventional and emphatic phase of his practice in which we find neither the lyrical and romantic outlook of his early manhood, nor the more passionate attitude of his old age.

Titian's painting is, at this period, magisterial and eloquent. In the 'Presentation of the Virgin,' in Venice, we admire a partial return to a more charming and discursive mood; but the 'Allocution' was never a typical work even before it became the total wreck which fire and repainting have now made of it.[1]

Titian's second and decisive meeting with the Emperor and the German court follows his memorable visit to Rome. He was seventy when he travelled over the mountains and through the snow in midwinter to Augsburg.

Of the many works done for the Royal house of Hapsburg during two visits to Augsburg and about the same period, the Prado still possesses, after the fires at the Alcazar in which most of them are known to have perished, the world-famous

[1] The so-called 'Duke of Ferrara' at Madrid is less emphatically repainted, but its condition is falsified by scraping and stippling.

'Charles v. riding into the Battle of Mühlberg,' and two of the four large decorative canvases done for the Queen of Bohemia, which now hang in a good light, and are, I trust, free at last from the tangle of tradition and criticism, which has insisted upon their being copies of lost originals instead of the superb originals themselves.

Charles v. — embittered, suspicious, and disillusioned as he was — seems to have felt attracted by the personality of the splendid and worldly old Titian. The once famous portrait in armour has long since disappeared; we recognise it in a poor copy (927) signed fatuously by Pantoja de la Cruz, and skied in the Prado, where it is said to be the work of this copyist, who could never have designed the original. In the copy we can still reconstruct for ourselves the gleam of the armour, the various quality in the whites, — the collar, baton, hose and leggings, — and the beauty of the sky seen in the glimpse, which must have belonged to the original.

The superbly conceived and designed 'Charles v. at the Battle of Mühlberg' still impresses us even more than the consideration of its actual importance as the original of all equestrian pictures done since would warrant. There is something haunting in the pallid and sunken face of the King, in full panoply, riding calmly, lance in



TITIAN. — CHARLES V. AT THE BATTLE OF MÜHLBERG

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hand, into the battle which we do not see as yet, the dusky lighting of the picture revealing only the trees and slopes of a wooded landscape near the Elbe. One thinks of a ghost on horseback, or of the body of that warrior which was placed in the saddle and driven into the ranks of the enemy at dawn. To the student of painting, the sky, the face, and the entire outer edge of the picture are encrusted with different restorations; but we still find the lustre of Titian in large spaces in the centre of the canvas.

We may pass over the picture of Charles's consort (485); it was never a work marked by great sincerity or effort, and is now, after its partial destruction by fire, a repainted wreck; perhaps the most disquieting canvas by a great master preserved in the Prado.

So far appearances have been against us; for the bulk of the Titians in Madrid are not the venerable hulks I have made them out to be: we shall find in others besides those mentioned evidence of restoration, over-cleaning, and damage, but on the whole the pictures contrast well with many Titians preserved on the Continent, notably in Italy.

Two huge canvases — 'Prometheus' and 'Sisyphus' — have now been cleaned and brought down from the height at which they were seen

four years ago, and which led to such hesitation on the part of most critics in writing about them. The tradition that they were old copies by Alonso Coello, or indeed by any Spaniard, — let alone so cold and cautious a colourist and painter as Coello, — perplexes us now we are brought face to face with the superb paintings themselves. The 'Prometheus' is not only an original, but we do not even detect the hand of an assistant in any of the accessories. Prometheus is here a human being; he has breathed and suffered; his flesh is dusky and seared. The picture has a broken and varied surface. It is full of variety in closely modulated tones; the pictorial scheme falling broadly into a series of tawny browns, greys, tawny reds, and blacks which in their texture are cool, yet foiled with red. Time, smoke, and wear may have broken the tones, and pitted the surfaces, which now show the colours of iron and its rust: be this as it may, the effect is astonishing, and we find ourselves fascinated, though the subject shows little in its conception to hold or touch us deeply.

The general aspect of the 'Sisyphus' is less impressive and less convincing: if it does not fall below its companion technically, it has less power of impressing us. Titian has suggested the power of colour to convey an impression of suffo-

cation and an odour of sulphur; the same quality burns more intensely, but with a cleaner flame, in portions of the superb 'St. Margaret.'

During Titian's second visit to Augsburg, Charles v. confided to him his desire for a work illustrating a cherished idea of his own, in which he and his family knelt under the protection of the Virgin at the throne of the Trinity. The Virgin, a figure wrapped in blue, moves towards the Trinity also clothed in blue; the same colour appears here and there in the combination of gold, rich ruddy brown, and green which compose rather than dominate the scheme of the work. The picture does not forcibly arrest the attention at first, though its actual texture is full of delightful passages of colour and painting, and that somewhat broken and vinous quality of colour we find adopted later by Van Dyck in his last English manner.

The patronage by the house of Hapsburg continued under Philip II. We have still preserved in the Prado one of many portraits by Titian of his new patron, the Catholic majesty whom he supplied (alternately or simultaneously) with those various poesies and pictures of piety which for the last ten years of Titian's life form the subjects of his correspondence.

Some of these are here, though the two superb

pictures ' Diana and Calisto,' ' Diana and Actæon,' are at Bridgewater House. The florid ' Europa ' is in America, and the original version of the ' Venus and Adonis ' is said to be in England; where we find also the darkened and not entirely attractive ' Perseus and Andromeda,' recently identified by that astute and sympathetic student and critic of Titian, Mr. Claude Phillips. We wonder what that small room can have looked like, in which Titian imagined the engaging and decorative arrangement for a ' camerino ' of those of his pictures which displayed the charms of ' loveliness undraped ' in different positions. The present management of the Prado has given us the chance of seeing most of Titian's masterpieces in small rooms, under ideal conditions as to size and height of wall-spacing, and the height at which they are seen. They hang in rooms large enough only to admit three pictures in line on each wall, and at a height from the ground which allows the light to strike and illumine the pigment and not merely to dissect it. I should be glad if this tribute to Señor Madrazo's energy and enthusiasm in rehanging the Prado might be set against my outspokenness regarding the over-cleaning of so many of the canvases, notably those by Velasquez.

The portrait of Philip II. now hangs almost



TITIAN — PORTRAIT OF PHILIP II

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touching the ground, as a full-length portrait should. This is the original canvas which was sent to England to testify to Philip's personal appearance at the time of the negotiations for his marriage with Queen Mary.

A tear in the canvas points to the damage done to it in transit; it is not the rent made there with a sword in Tennyson's play. If mended, and with those slighter patches one discovers in all old pictures, it is well preserved. There are points of agreement in technique between this work and the disputed 'Man with the Baton' at Munich, which Morelli has decided is not the work of Titian, despite the treatment of the hands, the thumb, and countless minutiæ which point to Titian's authorship. Both pictures — that at Munich and at the Prado — have an unusual quality in their outer aspect which reminds one of the more careful work of Tintoretto, though the resemblance is quite superficial.

Entirely Titian's own is the noble design of the portrait of Philip II.: the astonishing use made of the whites, the crisp and subtle pigment, and that faculty of holding the spectator, not by a vivid presentment merely, but by a more gradual process of appeal underlying the fine outer aspect of the work. Some painters we have no occasion to look at more than once, for their work repeats

one thing only; this is true of most pictures by Veronese and Franz Hals; their works fail to hold more than one impression. This is not due to their summary and emphatic workmanship alone; their minds were of the same pattern. Rembrandt may be still more summary, yet it is different with him. Titian in his own portrait in profile may content us with a few 'scumbles' of monotonous paint, instead of his habitual kneadings and revisions; the secret of fascination is there all the same: not merely is the work full of vitality, but it yields its secret gradually. In this portrait of Philip, with all its circumstances of pomp, its armour and curtain, we are interested in the pale, ugly, wistful, and stately man; we feel before it as we do under the influence of the Escorial and its legend, that Philip, with all his faults, was also a great gentleman, and the son of Charles v.

The 'Christ bearing the Cross' has for years passed — without the slightest foundation in fact — as the work of Bellini and Titian; this legend has definitely been disposed of, and the picture now takes rank amongst the later, but not the last, works of Titian. It is a picture from which much of the magic seems to evaporate in reproduction, suffering in this respect like the 'St. Margaret' in the same room; from each

work emanates an emotional force which is not due to the colour or workmanship alone, but to some indefinable and indwelling mood conveyed by the picture itself. Christ has fallen beneath the weight of the Cross, which forms in its light colour a dominating motive, cutting the picture by its strong diagonal. The robe of the Man of Sorrows is purple, or rather grape colour; the draperies of St. Simon are mauve: the painting shows signs of drastic revision by Titian. Recent over-cleaning may have chilled the lights; the picture shows an astounding and direct sense of statement in workmanship. The type of Christ is noble and ardent: the head seems to move slowly round with an almost threatening intensity, heightened by the gleam of a faint white halo about the hair. The hand resting on a stone is refined and nervous, and stained with blood, whilst the wrists show the stripes of the flagellation beneath the sleeve of the robe. The type chosen is thoughtful, and passionate: neither face nor flesh is that of the 'Cristo della Moneta' or of the 'Noli Me Tangere'; it is more sensitive than that painted in the 'Ecce Homo,' less merely human than that in the 'Entombment.' This picture, the 'St. Margaret,' and the more explicit 'Entombment,' impress us as dramatic pictures, though the mood is only grave and passionate

after all, compared with, shall we say, one of Rembrandt's more dramatic Entombments or Crucifixions. These pictures move us as if about them we were conscious of the tumult and rhythm, the recurring phrases of a symphony; the actors themselves make but a few large ominous gestures, or (as in the case of the 'Bearing of the Cross') merely move a hand or turn a head, and we are filled with a strong yet tonic sense of emotion.

There is something in the simplicity of the treatment of the central motives, in the gradual appeal to the imagination of the 'living' and varied workmanship, and of the passionate quality in the colour; though even here, if we turn to the 'Entombment,' we are brought face to face, not with sombre colours, but with white, crimson, blue, gold; tones one associates with brightness and pleasure, not with sorrow. Behind the picture of 'Christ bearing the Cross' there is, to the writer at least, an indefinable expression of mood and emotion, which has in its gravity that quality of fascination which we found in the earlier canvases — the 'Bacchanal,' the 'Ariadne,' — where, however, the indwelling spirit or mood is one of entranced serenity or happiness.

The 'St. Margaret' is a more famous canvas, in fact it has long been considered one of the masterpieces of the Prado. It is also well pre-



TITIAN. — ST. MARGARET

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served, a fact which in itself would be a great commendation, even in the case of a less important canvas by Titian. The picture is massed in large spaces of rich brown and rich green. Patches of deep blue appear through the clouds, which are alight with the reflections of the fire that sweeps away the town on the horizon, and is reflected sullenly by the waters below.

St. Margaret is clothed in green, and, with the cross in hand, gives one the impression by her gesture of an assertion of will and passionate hopefulness: the picture otherwise breathes a large and tragic desolation.

On the other side of the room hang the so-called 'Farnese and his Mistress,' and the 'Venus listening to a Musician.' These pictures belong to Titian's output for money-making; they are school amplifications of the heavy 'Venus of the Tribune,' more or less retouched by the master, of which there is little to say but that they reflect the ease and large toleration of a period still ostensibly devoted to the worship of beauty.

Of far greater artistic importance is the late 'Danaë,' a florid but undoubtedly superb piece of painting, of that broken and sensitive quality which we find at its best in the 'Diana and Actæon' of Bridgewater House.

I have mentioned the 'Entombment' earlier in this chapter, but the importance of the work necessitates further study of it. This masterpiece displays that increasing fervour in the treatment of religious subjects which is coincident in Titian's later work with the more ardent sensuality with which he treats secular subjects. The calm, the ease, the delight of Titian's early work have been left far behind in the closing years of his life. The effect of things upon him seems to have been stronger, if less steady. Titian's character, at first so balanced and so open, now shows a more feverish hold upon the world, upon art, and upon the all-absorbing passion for work. 'At this time the light of his intellect burns more duskily, and with a hint amongst the ashes of a keener flame illumining things more fitfully, but with those chance flashes of a torch in the richness of a sanctuary.'

In the early 'Entombment' in the Louvre the scene moves rhythmically; it expresses an eloquent grief. In the picture at the Prado, the friends of Christ are more absorbed by the entombing of the Man of Sorrows, whose flesh is no longer that of the athlete or the god, but that of one who is seared and worn, and of the same mould as the Prometheus. There is a passionate converging of faces towards the grave, great tenderness in



TITIAN. — THE ENTOMBMENT

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the lifting of the dead; — those who are old are burying the young.

An old copy at the Prado, a wretched school variant at the Brera, hint at there having been once a greater gloom and depth in the colour of this picture; — though as it stands it is even more interesting in pigment and touch than the late 'Crown of Thorns' at Munich, which Tintoretto declared to be a model of the art of painting. In this work, and in the profile of the painter at the age of ninety-two, we may detect a singular affinity in workmanship with the late painting of G. F. Watts: the touch is broken, the pigment having a dry and frosted grain which reminds one of old cloth-of-gold or of the efflorescence of certain metals.

'The Battle of Lepanto,' still attributed to Titian, was probably never painted by him. The scheme of design had been thrust on the master by Philip II.; it reminds one of the terrible additions to the 'Doge Grimani in Adoration,' as it now hangs in that cemetery of reputed masterpieces, the Ducal Palace at Venice.

This survey of the Titians in the Prado has left out of count certain works, such as 'Spain coming to the Rescue of Religion,' the fragment of the 'Noli Me Tangere,' and the once fine, but now damaged 'Knight of Malta'; as well as works

which, like the two 'Mater Dolorosas,' the 'Christ,' the 'Salome,' and the smaller 'Christ bearing the Cross,' belong in the main to the output of his school, and not to the master himself.

We find Titian to the last a painter, one finding strength and inspiration in contact with his material; none surpass him in the perfect expression of himself, none have said their say more perfectly. His range is equalled only by his facility — a facility which knew no limitation, save that imposed upon him by his perfect taste, his unfailing instinct for the fit and the beautiful.

The personality of the man escapes us in the variety, the apparent facility, and the copiousness of his work. Historical research has busied itself with his letters and a few historical facts, in which we detect the pressure of his time upon the worker, not the revelation of the painter's personality. Therefore we turn from gossip and the facts of mere conventional intercourse to his radiant and passionate art; and here again the man disappears and we have the artist.

The sentimentalist will miss in Titian's painting the evidence of sentimentality; his art is too intense and too real for this. The materialist will be annoyed at the dignity and breadth of his outlook and treatment; Titian's art is never incidental or trivial. Finally, the art student will

scrutinise and weigh the slightest element in his practice; — to find that Titian's secret does not lie in consummate glazes and 'underpaintings,' but in the conduct and temper of the whole.

The timid and tepid moral sensibility of the nineteenth century has sniffed at and pried into Titian's life and character, and felt shocked yet disappointed; shocked that there was nothing deserving blame, but disappointed that somehow his life was not 'a protest against the ways and manners of his time.' Titian's protest was his work: his comment upon life was the generous quality of his art, its nobility and range.

Titian loved money, we are told; but in his time, as in ours, money meant ease to work and independence from futile tasks.

There is affectation in asking more from Titian than that which he gave so largely: he was a citizen of this world, and found it good. Let us be grateful for once for so large a grasp and so sure an outlook upon what was fine and delightful in the great realities of life. So many artists have not found that secret; and their work is the monument of an exquisite isolation, which through them we may also enjoy.

Titian's was the golden opportunity caught and made perpetual; his that perfect good luck, that entire felicity which gives him his unique

place in art. Against him are the sentimentalist and the born critic, who, like the poor, 'are always with us': and the position of the last is not with art, but ever outside it. Titian, in exchange for a large and easy life, has given the world his series of noble canvases, the 'Assunta,' the 'Bacchanal,' and the rest; he turned his knighthood and his pensions into works like the 'Christ bearing the Cross' and the 'Entombment.' Then let us be quite frank, and realise that beyond and above the man and the circumstances of his life is the expression of that truer self which we find in his work, — that nobler personality which we recognise with such pleasure in its various degrees of intensity in each of his achievements. Judged by the square inch, as mere painting or design, the value of an artist's output may be very great; it is immeasurably more so when we realise that his success in this or in any other element of appeal forms part of a great whole, tending towards some rare form of intellectual assertion. We realise this most when we have thrown overboard those stupid mechanical tests usually applied by critics, as to whether a work is well done by some all-round standard, whether it combines mutually exclusive qualities. The success of an artist does not lie in an all-round compromise between different artistic gifts:

if he has remoulded the world of sensation and event for himself, he has enlarged our experience by the intensity of his own, and we should be satisfied.

It is incredible what we owe in the matter of vision and experience to the greatest masters. Without Rembrandt, for instance, a whole range of emotion would have partly failed us, or would at least have been seen and known less readily, and we might not understand those beauties which are the fruits of experience and disillusion; we might have remained indifferent to the tide-marks of passion upon a human face; we might never have pictured for ourselves the melancholy of Saul, for instance, or the melancholy of David, or of Pilate when he washed his hands; we might never even have noticed the hands of an old man fondling a child. Rembrandt reveals in his art that profound tenderness and forbearance of a man who, standing on the outer edge of life, looks back upon it with infinite compassion.

Without Titian other experiences might have failed us, and that deep sense of crisis we each carry in us at times in our life might not have found its visible expression; we might have remained insensible also to the beautiful and unique significance of outward things, accepting them more casually. Without the 'Bacchanal,'

for instance, we should not realise how noble and self-sufficient is the mere sense of happiness, how noble also is the power of contemplation. The average man is quicker in grasping at some thought through the channel of words than through that of painting, for in the use of words we have all been trained from our childhood; and to him this has become the main source of experience, since it is the one in which he is most cultivated and alert. To illustrate the indwelling quality in some of Titian's pictures, I would quote the line of a young poet paraphrasing an old Greek poet, and write, 'Let beauty beautifully move.' This the average man might be quick to understand. I might further add —

> 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty, — that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know,'

to convey what I find expressed in Titian's 'Bacchanal,' his most vivid and most personal revelation in the world of art — the most vivid personal message he has brought to us and to those coming after us.

Space does not allow for more than a few words about those painters whose activity belongs to the life-time of Titian. The picture by Lorenzo Lotto in the Prado, a recently-married couple

united by Cupid, is a typical work of this eclectic and overrated painter; it is not conspicuous, however, for that charm of colour which at times relieves the sleepy surfaces of his pictures, notably at Vienna and Bergamo; it is timid in execution and, as usual, feeble in drawing. The sentiment or sentimentality of the work is on a level with the temper of the artist's sitters, who seem to have been usually of the retired tradesman class; it is, however, a more entertaining interpretation of conventionalised family life than the large, smug, and feeble picture in the National Gallery, but like that work, we imagine its conditions to have been dictated by the sitters. A 'St. Jerome' formerly attributed to Titian is now given to Lotto.

The tendency of Tintoretto is always to be expressive, romantic, and eloquent; to be inspired, against time, against odds, and even in the absence of inspiration; something unbalanced and incoherent obscures the intermittent flashes of his really extraordinary power and facility.

In the fine 'Sea Fight' of the Prado, we note the flash of steel-like blues, so constant in his pictures, and in the distant crowd a tangle of blonde colours, which anticipate some of the curious workmanship of El Greco's 'St. Marcellus' in the Escorial. The Prado is not the place in

which to estimate the fascinating but irregular art of Tintoretto; two fine portraits and a large sketch for the ' Paradise ' in the Ducal palace are of a high order, — the portrait of a man (412) ranks in fact with the ' Lady in Black ' at Dresden as a work we might compare with Titian, though the cool greys, the cool green tones in the flesh and in the blacks, belong to Tintoretto, and would have charmed Velasquez.

The steady, spacious, and monotonous art of Veronese is illustrated in the gallery by many works of that nondescript kind we often find in continental galleries, in which the present writer does not hope to distinguish between him and his many assistants. But in one work we have the most exquisite of all the small pictures attributed to Veronese, ' The Finding of Moses,' and in saying this I have not forgotten the small ' Battle of Lepanto ' at the Academia in Venice. Overcleaning has not deprived this work of the original and fascinating colour scheme, with its blues, greens, orange and rose blended with silver — blended not in an easy and faultless harmony, but in a curious scheme, with strange transitions, in which certain colours clash at contact with each other, but become merged in the sparkle and ' melody ' of the whole. Watteau would have been lost in

admiration of the dainty figures in the distance, with their flashing skirts and gleaming shoulders. The baby Moses lies in white linen, like a rosebud under lawn; the pinks and whites and greys of the delicate flesh are exquisite in their quality.

CHAPTER IX

THE FLEMISH PRIMITIVES

As Spain was at one time a ready market for early Flemish art, it is natural that the Prado should be rich in specimens of Flemish painting. The wealth of the collection consists, however, in its quantity rather than in its quality: or rather, though the average is high, there is only a small percentage of works which justify their attributions in the catalogue to the greatest names in the early art of the Netherlands and Flanders.

But the very character of the school tends towards the realisation of an average. It may be said that, within certain limits, early Flemish art is rarely bad, at least in workmanship; it is perhaps too sweeping a statement to say that the works of this school are also rarely fine. At least they do not seem so to one who has studied the great primitive schools of Italy, in which we find greater effort and greater originality, and the evidence of a nobler cast of mind.

We have in the works of Jan van Eyck the one supreme success of the Netherlandish primitives.

With him we may class his astonishing but less forcible brother, Hubert. Their work stands on an eminence apart; they are unrivalled in the Northern schools of the fifteenth century.

At the present moment it is perhaps difficult to estimate with accuracy the exact value of the achievement of the early Flemish school, as it has emerged but recently from a long and unmerited neglect. The principal merits of the Flemish Primitives are a great sincerity, and the rich and instinctively harmonious colour we rarely miss in their work; both qualities attract the intelligent and foolish alike, and the latter are still further charmed by the elaboration of detail and the cleanliness and gloss displayed in the workmanship. On those greater artistic matters, design, inventive drawing, and inventive colour, the early Flemings have little to say. The school as a whole is deserving of the praise it obtains; still these artists are too limited in range, too limited in the evidence of genuine personality and noble invention.

The sincerity of their aim, the soundness and beauty of their method, will win over the art-lover whom their monotony might otherwise annoy. Their strength and their weakness lie in the very excellence of their average, they are men of one school and of one mood.

The early Flemish painters began their work at the time of the bankruptcy of the great Gothic art movement. It is for that reason that they delight many persons who, approaching it sentimentally and with insufficient knowledge, value Gothic art as the assertion of a fashion (in this case the Christian fashion), instead of measuring it as part of a stupendous if abortive effort of passionate experiment like all great art, and therefore beyond the scope of any mere fashion in thought or manners.

The real strength of the early Flemish school lies in the art of Jan van Eyck. Recent discoveries have tended to confirm the opinion that a superb share in the foundation of their convention belongs to his elder brother, Hubert. But if Hubert's originality was very great indeed, his artistic personality was less intense than that of his brother; it does not lie crystallised in a series of epoch-making works, such as the 'Adam' at Brussels, the 'Man with the Pink' at Berlin, or the 'Virgin, St. George and Donor' at Bruges — to mention works in which we find more of the strength than the sweetness of Jan van Eyck.

The history of this school during the fifteenth century is one of a gradual lessening of hold by certain very accomplished craftsmen on the magnificent convention of the two gifted brothers

Van Eyck. We find more force if less accomplishment in Van der Goes than in Rogier van der Weyden, more gloss in Dierick Bouts; a delicate and moody impassiveness in the work of Memlinc, more emotional force in Quentin Matsys: and below these men in artistic rank we find Petrus Cristus and Gerard David, in whom design and finish have become mechanical.

No known painting remains in the Peninsula as a record of Jan van Eyck's visit there, and the works under his name in the Prado are merely interesting variations on motives by his brother and himself. In the case of No. 1353, the 'Marriage of the Virgin,' we have a fine work, cool in colour and serious in aim, which may well be by some unknown painter who stands midway between Hubert van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden. Another work is attributed to Hubert van Eyck — 'The Saviour, Virgin, and St. John' under a florid gold canopy, out of which peeps an angel in white. This is an adaptation of the principal figures in the upper part of the altarpiece at Ghent, by Hubert, the angel being partly adapted from that in the 'Annunciation' by Jan van Eyck, on the outside of the shutters of the same work at Berlin. The gold canopy is of that late florid type we find on the threshold of the sixteenth century. The cold browns and

cool lights, above all the unmistakable character in form, scale of tones, and workmanship of the hands, show this picture to be an undoubted work of adaptation by no less a man than Gossart de Mabuse.

The famous 'Fountain of Life,' attributed to Jan van Eyck, has been the subject of so much discussion that we are liable to underrate this careful sixteenth-century copy of a missing and priceless work by Hubert van Eyck. The design is noble, the upper part recalling the holy persons in the altar-piece at Ghent. The doctors of the church and synagogue, grouped round the fountain, show some of that largeness in the cast of the draperies, and that virility of type, which belongs to the prophets and anchorites at Berlin.

Modern critics are agreed that the two large 'Depositions' in the Prado attributed to Rogier van der Weyden are fine old sixteenth-century copies of the one now in the Escorial. The large altar-piece (also assigned to that master) from St. Aubert, is only a good and careful, if not particularly attractive, school work.

We are more fortunate in the important work attributed to Memlinc, which is a late original of the greatest importance. It is lacking in the more glowing and jewel-like quality of pigment that we admire in his early pictures, but not in

the importance and quality of the design. This is the same as that of the 'Adoration of the Kings' (at Bruges), but developed and amplified more richly; showing greater force also in character and in drawing. This panel breathes an air of intense and steady piety, and is fine as a work of art, if somewhat cold in workmanship. (This criticism is too harsh, and the word 'hard' would also be unjust.) It is however very different in the quality of its technique from the picture of the Virgin in the Uffizi and that in the possession of the Duke of Westminster, which Mr. Weale has very rightly attributed to some close if late imitator of Memlinc.

We touch a lower level, both in aim and accomplishment, when we pause to praise the work of Petrus Cristus. His name should have been placed earlier, since he forms, by the date of his works and the character of his shadows and colour (if I may be pardoned so rash a statement of personal conviction) the link between the art of Jan van Eyck and that of Antonello da Messina. I feel sure that this fact will be at some time established by one better qualified and equipped by a study of Antonello, and by a knowledge of the real history of the early Flemish school.

The authenticity of the triptych by Petrus Cristus has been disputed; but considering how

uncertain are the criteria usually employed in estimating early Flemish pictures, the present writer hazards his opinion that this beautiful work is similar to others which go under the name of this once famous master, both in method of pigment and in scale of colour, — notably in the deep reds and browns.

A rather larger measure of praise might well be accorded to Joachim Patinir than is usually given to this little master. The Prado contains six of his works, two of which, despite their smallness of workmanship, arrest one's attention. They are charming alike to the eye and to the imagination. A delicate strain of fancy flickers in his two large idyllic pictures here, ' The Temptation of St. Anthony ' and ' The Virgin in a Landscape.' A strain of perverse over-sweetness characterises the she-devils or temptresses of the Anchorite, as they advance, clothed in delicate raiment, in a landscape more moss-grown and saturated by mist and moisture than is the wont even of this small painter, who holds one's attention, in default of greater qualities, by just this hint of freshness and dankness in his landscapes. True, the means at his disposal are slight and small; yet in the secondary rank Patinir is one of those little masters whose reputation might well be greater; and together with Altdorfer of

Ratisbon and the once famous Elsheimer he should rank above many a third-rate Italian, whom a student of pictures is supposed to know all about; — or shall we say, to know too much about?

The last of these two, Elsheimer, is represented in the Prado by a dark and indifferent work. But he and Altdorfer really belong to the German school of which I have already spoken in the summary of the contents of the Prado.

The art of Antonio Moro is still left to the archæologist. The present writer is at a loss to account for the comparative obscurity of this admirable and realistic artist, whose obvious qualities might even have won too much praise; for we moderns approach the art of figure painting from the standpoint of the portrait painter only, and beyond this Moro never strays. He might therefore have afforded a common meeting-ground for the different schools of art appreciation, if for nothing else than his forceful sincerity, which all should understand.

This artist was born at Utrecht in 1512 (?): he died in 1578 (?). The eleven pictures by him in the Prado are unfortunately for the most part over-crowded, and hung where their polished surfaces catch the light: it is perhaps for this reason that they pass unnoticed, and that photog-

raphy has not so far aided in popularising them. I would add that their proximity to each other reveals a certain monotony in the general scheme of the design which is doubtless a fault, — perhaps forced upon Moro by the conditions required in court pictures and court painters.

The reproduction given here of the portrait of Queen Mary speaks for itself. It is a masterpiece of characterisation, — genial, yet searching in its realism; we feel interested in this ugly well-dressed woman holding a rose. Hardly inferior to this work is the portrait of the Princess Juana of Austria, in black, which is placed at an unlucky angle with a window. As a woman she is not attractive, though still young; her glance is a little disquieting and not intelligent; she is dressed in mourning, the black of her dress being relieved by a white kerchief tied loosely about her neck (from which hangs a jewel) and by a napkin she holds in her hand. I think her type suggests that of some unpleasant or melancholy foreign governess; her dress, however, reveals a consummate if austere taste. Her carriage, the placing of her hands, impress the spectator with a sense of her refinement and dignity.

Very different in character is the picture of the Buffoon of the Count of Benavente, which now



ANTONIO MORO. — PORTRAIT OF QUEEN MARY OF ENGLAND

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hangs in the small room given over to masterpieces; where it justifies its right to its present place as a work of art, and achieves a singular measure of popularity with visitors to the Prado. This picture is astonishingly vivid and effective, with its blacks and whites in the carefully painted clothes, its fortunate spacing, and the wonderfully expressed animality of the man with his heavy jaw, large ears, and huge feet; he looks keenly out towards the spectator, as if in doubt, like a watchful beast, whilst his hand holds a playing-card.

Other works rank hardly below these in effort or execution, but strike one less forcibly. We are interested in the Emperor Maximilian II. (dressed in white), and in his wife, who appears *précieuse* and somewhat affected in her exquisite robe, with the beautiful jewels, and the large pearls at her throat and wrists. The impression left on the present writer by Antonio Moro's works at the Prado is one of surprise, almost of discovery; though other artists have returned from Madrid attracted or interested by his work, which in its realism conveys a sense of a temperament at once brutal and exquisite.

CHAPTER X

RUBENS AND HIS PICTURES IN THE PRADO

RUBENS' position and influence in art, as one of its greatest and most brilliant exponents, have been admitted for so long that they are now taken for granted; yet much of the fascination his work exercised upon artists in the past has become worn with use, or perhaps abuse. It is to some extent for this reason that he is now studied so little by those very painters who would not paint and see as they do had not Rubens invented or developed the language they use in painting. This statement is true in substance, though it requires qualification, or even amendment. Twice in the nineteenth century has Rubens suffered a similar eclipse: once in France, during the prevalence of the classical fashion against which Delacroix rebelled, and once in England, when the Pre-Raphaelite painters, with their analytic method and analytic psychology of art, turned away from that great moulder and builder of splendid artistic generalities, the supreme master of effect-

iveness and force in art and its practice. We may say that in the early nineteenth century French artists became blinded to the exuberant beauties of Rubens' manner, owing to the study of a different mode of plastic effect, founded on classical sculpture, which they, Ingres alone excepted, understood like the hack restorer of the antique. In England, on the other hand, Lawrence, J. Ward, and Turner benefited (as Delacroix has pointed out) by the study of the Flemish method which Rubens amplified and recast, and of which he still remains the supreme exponent.

A new wave of analysis in painting among more recent artists has also tended, like the Pre-Raphaelite movement, to produce a large measure of indifference towards the painting of Rubens. Our generation, which is one of landscape painters and solitary experimentalists, forgets the influence of Rubens upon Constable, Turner, and Delacroix, who all helped to shatter the pseudo-classical convention.

The studies and sketches of the moderns, their art when it is art, is the beguilement of their solitude. For them Rubens speaks too broad, too general a tongue — one which necessitates too great a response from a public of trained and admirable persons, such as no longer exists in our period of general suffrage. For the moment,

too, the personality of two other painters has supervened; namely Rembrandt, the great experimentalist in painting and those intellectual qualities which make for art; and Velasquez, whose aim was outwardly one of observation and analysis, though his method still leans upon tradition, and reveals that love of order which is perhaps one-half of that indefinable quality we mean to express when we speak of beauty.

Rubens' position is safe, however. His universality of temper allows for some of those more intimate qualities in which his art would at first sight seem lacking; and his influence has been so fruitful in the past, and even until quite recently, that he may securely await the return to allegiance of a generation which only remembers the vacancy of his last imitators — or rather of the imitators of his imitators. For if his real descendants are Van Dyck, Jordaens, Watteau, Reynolds, Lawrence, these also have their parodists: there are the parodists of Reynolds, such as Hoppner and Beechey, and the parodists of the brilliant Lawrence, such as Raeburn and Etty. All of these paint with Rubens' palette, his red shadows and golden reflections in flesh and his creamy lights — in fact, all the tinsel of touch and colour they found and secured among the gems and radiances in Rubens' pictures.

I have described the art of Titian as illustrating 'the truth of outward things'; we might say that Rubens illustrated 'the effectiveness of outward things.' Life, beauty, and passion found in him — not that power of consecration we admire in the great art of Titian — but a generous welcome and a large power of affirmation.

His will must have been equal to his facility and power of assimilation, since his effort and output never flagged. We might forget the first quality in the ready evidence of the two latter, did we not possess the great evidence of continued study and will for perfection which his pictures and sketches themselves reveal; did we not know that some of his most radiant and passionate pictures were done when the tide of his life was at its ebb, when actual physical pain attacked his hands, and broke that physical energy we divine to have been his from the temper and character of his work throughout. I am aware that such ready sentimental conclusions as to character and temper are not always justified by fact, and that a man's art is often the very confession of all that he would have wished to be in life, but was not actually.

It is a common statement made in books that Rembrandt was the last of the great masters — those inventors of a phase in art. This statement

is partly true, but not absolutely so. Of Rubens it is easier to speak; he is the last of those great artists who were great as men, as human types. The race of painters has declined in mental stature and range, if not always in intensity and nervous force. Possibly the prevailing anarchy in our social ideals, our lack of sense for the finer responsibilities in life, has prevented the greater men we have had in the nineteenth century from expressing all the various energies they might have shown; since a sign of our decadence lies in our ready depreciation of genius, our prevailing sense that it is 'too good to be true.' This at any rate is the habit of the more cultured; and between this caste, once a small one, and the many, there is only an unimportant difference of numbers, hardly of kind. Most of the greatest men in the art of the nineteenth century have therefore given us specimens only of their powers, even as painters. They have done this under difficulties, deprived of ready recognition; some of them had intellects perhaps equal to Rubens', but our times are not propitious for the expression of power and universality. We moderns dislike personalities that require too much room, and the spread of education has made us jealous of our separate good and of our important unimportance.

Rubens had the good luck to live at a different

epoch, before the final crystallisation of the aims of the Renaissance into snobbism and orthodoxy. I use the expression ' good luck ' quite fearlessly — it has a large part in the composition of all virtues — beauty and genius included. Rubens' fine character was therefore given full scope; but his character and life (as far as this book is concerned) are of secondary importance, for to the world a man's art is the real man. Once made the richer by this gift of his, we should ask for nothing more; though we are delighted to know that Rubens' life was, like his art, a masterpiece of energy and order. Energy, order; order in the exuberant expression of power; an unflagging energy to seize upon the effectiveness of things; these are his great characteristics as an artist. We will return to this in the estimate of his work and genius which will follow the few necessary statements about his career and the works he painted for the court of Spain, — works which fill some three rooms in the Prado, given over to him and to Van Dyck, the most versatile of painters.

Rubens was born at Siegen in 1577, during the voluntary exile and the actual disgrace of his father. He died full of fame and honour in Antwerp in 1640. The history of his birth has been discovered by modern research; it is probable that Rubens himself never knew the truth

concerning it. His father, to judge by his life and conduct, — at once meddlesome and equivocal during the terrible times of religious persecution in Flanders, — seems to have been able, but weak. During his voluntary exile with his family at Cologne, whither he had fled to escape from his position at Antwerp, where he stood suspected of Protestantism, — he became entangled in an intrigue with his patroness, Anne of Saxony, wife of William of Nassau. Tortured and imprisoned for this, he was saved from actual death by the energy and noble tenderness of his wife. The first years of the great painter's life were therefore passed under the shadow of the family disgrace, under the dread of constant requisitions from the House of Nassau in the form of money levies — blackmail, in fact.

After the death of Rubens' father his mother returned to Antwerp, a devout Catholic, where she proved herself as good a mother as she had been a courageous wife. The precocity and self-control displayed by her illustrious son as a young man may well have been learned in the austere atmosphere of his home, in which a sensitive child would soon grow into adolescence and manhood under the stress of early responsibilities. Rubens was precocious also in his wish to become an artist. His two early masters, Verhaecht and

Van Noort, have formed the subject of those ingenious speculations which always surround the earliest and not very significant events in the lives of all eminent men. Van Noort lives for us in legend, or rather in a sentence by Fromentin, and in the fine etching by Van Dyck. We touch historic ground when Rubens becomes the favourite pupil of the mediocre artist, Otto Venius, — with whom he could have found little to learn unless it was that respect for his craft, and for the example of the great masters, which characterised Rubens through life. Otto Venius probably advised the young painter to visit Italy, where he passed three years devoted to the study of the great masters, and in working for his patron Vincent of Gonzaga, whom he met at Venice. It was in his capacity as painter — art factotum almost — that Rubens was despatched in ~~1603~~ 1628 with rare gifts and copies of rare pictures, on a mission to Spain — a mission as envoy and diplomatist, to gain and to sound friends in the interests of the court of Mantua, and to paint the beautiful women of the Spanish court for that gallery of fair women, which was one of the many rather futile occupations in which this descendant of the Gonzagas expended the resources of his family, which had once counted for so much in the evolution of the Renaissance.

Rubens was not new to the life of courts; his three years in the service of the Gonzagas had prepared him for his mission to Spain. We find him vigilant and tactful in his movements, trenchant in his estimate of the 'vanity and laziness' of Spanish painters, and equally outspoken in his appreciation of the marvellous productions of Raphael and Titian and other great masters, 'whose quality and number had filled him with admiration in the palaces of the King at the Escorial and elsewhere.'

A portion of the gift from Mantua had been damaged during the journey, owing to defective packing; two of these pictures Rubens replaced by the 'Heraclitus' and 'Democritus,' now in the Prado, — two forcible and accomplished but mannered works. One finds it difficult to imagine that they are almost the first of his pictures that have come down to us.[1]

To this period of Rubens' career belong the powerful but perfunctory heads of the Apostles, in the Prado, now badly lit and placed.

The year 1604 found Rubens again in Italy,

[1] The three paintings attributed to Rubens at Valladolid are known to me only by photography. About the 'St. Francis receiving the Stigmata' there is no need for doubt; the other two are less individual, or rather less typical. On the evidence of the photographs I should have guessed that they were rather indefinite early works by Van Dyck, though tradition is probably right in this matter.

still passionately a student and a copyist of the masterpieces, and still in the service of the Mantuan court, — till 1608, when he returned to Antwerp, alarmed at the illness of his mother, whom he found dead on his return.

In the following years at Antwerp the life of Rubens runs broadening and deepening, and with it his art. The museum of Munich contains the famous portrait of the artist and his admirable wife, Isabel Brant, painted in the year of their marriage. The Pitti contains the late picture of Isabel as a young matron, one of the most perfect portraits in the world: in this work the loving and grateful sense of the painter has endowed each feature with animation and charm. A sort of tender and inward glow emanates from the work itself; the very brushes used by the painter seem to have been alive and in love. It is one of the most genuinely tender and impassioned pictures I have seen; one of the most radiant yet intense pieces of painting.

With increasing artistic power, energy, and wealth Rubens won fame by such works as the 'Elevation of the Cross,' the 'Descent from the Cross,' the 'Coup de Lance.' The advent of his children is recorded by such pictures as the 'Madonna and Innocents' in the Louvre, and the 'Madonna in a wreath of Children' at Munich.

While he was maturing that elaborate scheme of collaboration by which he was able to pour masterpieces upon the world, and to which we owe such a splendid series of vast canvases — a scheme in which we are dumfounded by the fusion, unity, and power displayed in the works,— Rubens produced also such masterpieces as the 'Miraculous Draught of Fishes' at Malines, the marvellous 'Communion of St. Francis' at Antwerp, the miraculous 'Fall of the Damned,' and the 'Battle of the Amazons.' Nothing great or small is beyond his scope; the greatest enterprises (to use his own words) 'have never daunted *his* courage.' To the period of his extreme fertility belongs the Medici series in the Louvre. Somewhat later he designed the 'Triumphs of Religion and the Eucharist.' In preparation for this last series (executed at the command of the Infanta Isabella, Regent of the Netherlands, for the nuns of St. Clara at Madrid), the Prado contains a series of sketches and their duplicates. One of these sets is probably genuine; no doubt whatever can be felt over the smaller and quite jewel-like series of sketches for these designs, now preserved in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge. The set at the Prado is badly hung, and the present writer has to confess that the sketches do not reveal that sparkle and dash which is so



RUBENS. — ADAM AND EVE

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constant a charm in Rubens' preparatory designs; for instance, in the Medici series or the Achilles series.

The execution of the 'Triumphs of Religion' was the means of bringing Rubens once more into contact with the equivocal world of diplomacy and international politics, in which he had hitherto only informally engaged himself. We can imagine how he welcomed this excuse for new work, travel, and mental activity, as an escape from the sorrow which had befallen him in the death of his first wife. Elaborate negotiations with a view to a complicated peace with England occupied Rubens on his mission; the pretext for which was the execution of portraits of the Spanish royalties for his patroness, the Regent of the Netherlands. During the enforced leisure of his attendance upon the Spanish court, Rubens found time to make marvellous copies of the masterpieces by Titian, and preserved in the Prado is the radiant 'Adam and Eve.'[1]

We turn from the tangle of diplomatic schemes which it was the business of Rubens and his masters to unravel to study the works he painted in Madrid and those which he had brought with him — or rather what remains of them. Of

[1] In the same room hangs a damaged copy of Titian's 'Europa and the Bull,' which in its present condition suggests that it is only an eighteenth-century copy of the one made by Rubens.

eight pictures which accompanied the artist as a gift to Philip IV. from his aunt, the Regent of the Netherlands, two only remain in the Prado; a showy but not unattractive picture of three nymphs with a cornucopia, in which we detect little of his work, and the painting of 'Achilles surprised among the Daughters of Lycomedes.' This picture, which figures in the list drawn up by Rubens of his own works, at the time of his negotiations for the exchange of some of his paintings against the antiques belonging to Sir Dudley Carleton, is described as 'painted by my best pupil, and entirely retouched by me. This is a charming work containing a great number of very beautiful young girls.' 'My best pupil' has always been taken to mean Van Dyck, though the picture itself suggests, curiously enough, the hand of Jordaens — a fact which emphasises that singular resemblance we find at times between the work of Jordaens and the early work of Van Dyck.

We have noted previously Rubens' meeting with Velasquez, who was in fact placed in attendance upon the great Antwerper, and became his guide and friend during his stay at Madrid.

Philip IV., like Marie de Medicis, and like Charles I. of England, became attracted by the art of Rubens, prepossessed in his favour, won



RUBENS. — MARIE DE MEDICIS

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over by his personal tact and the charm of his manner.

The painter found in Madrid, not only some early works dating from his first mission to Spain as envoy of the court of Mantua, but the large, florid, and brilliant 'Adoration of the Magi' which he had painted for the Hotel de Ville of Antwerp on his return from Italy — a picture which leaves upon the spectator the impression of a somewhat huddled pageant.

For a few years — if we include the Medici series, the 'Triumphs of Faith,' and the series done for Whitehall — we note a slight flagging in the quality of Rubens' invention; other canvases, done, like most of those in the National Gallery, in the early years of his later manner or at a moment of transition, painted to please himself, are surpassed only by a few picked works of the master.

The portrait of Marie de Medicis in the Prado, in part unfinished, passes traditionally as a sketch made in preparation for the Louvre series. To me it seems to be later in date and to have been painted during her voluntary exile in Brussels. Our preconceived impression of the queen as a vain and selfish woman breaks down before this marvellous work of art and characterisation; she seems kindly and witty, or at least good-

natured and vivacious. This portrait ranks among the treasures of the Prado, and among the finest portraits of women ever painted.

The other three masterpieces by Rubens in Madrid are the 'Garden of Love,' the 'Rondo,' and, most marvellous of all, the 'Three Graces': they belong to the last phase of the master's work, and form part of a series which followed upon his marriage with his second wife, the radiant Helen Fourment, — the 'second Helen' as he used to call her. Give to a woman the type we would choose for Pomona, give her the large steady lustrous eyes of Io; such is Helen Fourment as she appears in her portraits by Rubens.

With her advent his art becomes more brilliant, his scheme of tones even more reminiscent, if possible, of the pulp and bloom of fruits and the colours of flowers. This last phase of Rubens' painting is illustrated by his portraits of Helen as a bride and as a mother, and by works like the 'Garden of Love,' in which we notice reminiscences of her presence, her movements, and her dresses; — though her features occur only in a single figure, for which she may not even have sat to Rubens.

The political life of a painter had ceased, at his earnest wish; his employment in these matters had almost been pressed upon him from without —



RUBENS. — THE RONDO

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or rather he had gradually found himself caught in the trammels of a diplomatic life, from the readiness of others to benefit by his intellectual gifts. Rubens had very naturally proved himself, in his casual excursions into public affairs, a man of an intellectual calibre very different from that of mere politicians by profession; though his missions had proved only of transitory importance. Even had they been quite successful, one wonders if their result would have proved by now so valuable to the world as his 'Triumph of Silenus' or his 'Helen Fourment in a fur pelisse.' Rubens forsook the cleaning out of political chimneys and political drains to devote himself with renewed fervour to his work.

The reproductions of the 'Garden of Love,' the 'Rondo,' and the 'Three Graces' speak for themselves; they form part of that extraordinary phase of his genius to which we may add the 'Andromeda' at Berlin, the 'Pelisse' at Vienna, the 'Nymph and Faun' and the 'Triumph of Silenus' at Munich, the 'Worship of Venus' at Vienna, and with them the various and almost miraculous portraits of Helen Fourment. His astonishing landscapes form a more intimate confession of his sensibilities as an artist and a man than many a more pompous and gorgeous series done earlier.

In this last phase of his work he visualises the world with such vividness that he makes us wonder and rub our eyes. He also paints such pictures as the 'March to Calvary,' the 'Martyrdom of St. Lievin' (at Brussels), and the 'Fury of Progne' (at Madrid), in which his brush astonishes us by a new violence in colour and expression. In the last phase of his painting the qualities of his vision and workmanship become more elastic, more expressive, I had almost said more feverish. But it is a fever of creation; if his emotions are poured out in a hotter torrent, we are conscious also of something more magnetic and subtle in them. We are astonished by the result; the actual process of creation in his brain produces a counter-shock in ours; — whether he is tragic and unsparing, as we find him in the 'Fury of Progne'; or ecstatic, as in his painting of the 'Virgin and St. George and Saints' in the church of St. James at Antwerp; or passionate in his powers of vision, as in the 'Three Graces' at the Prado.

His noble and beautiful landscapes in London and Florence coincide with his purchase of the castle at Steen; they are his holiday pieces, and the Prado is fortunate in the possession of a fine hunting-piece, which reveals that unflagging resource as a painter which had always been his



RUBENS — THE THREE GRACES

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privilege: it shows also that racy sense for facts that we find in the landscape in the National Gallery. Though it is less realistic than this, the most placid of Rubens' landscapes, it is more essentially realistic than the landscape in the 'Rondo,' or than that most romantic of all his landscapes, the 'Castle with the tilting Knights' in the Louvre.

The bulk of the remaining pictures at Madrid formed part of a decorative scheme for a hunting pavilion, the Torre de la Parada, situated not far from the Buen Retiro. These works formed the subject of much correspondence between Philip IV. and the Regent of Flanders; it was agreed that Rubens should supply the sketches, but that, owing to the number of the works and the haste required, a large portion of their execution should be intrusted to his friends and pupils, Cornelius de Vos, Quellin, Gouwi, Jordaens, and Snyders. Many of these pictures cast a side-light upon the evidence of collaboration in Rubens' larger works; they establish the great facility and assimilative power of one among his pupils, Gouwi. Several works at the Prado authenticated as the sole work of Rubens, such as the 'Saturn' and the 'Venus' in the series of the Planets, are his throughout; others, such as the 'Rape of Proserpine,' the 'Centaurs and Lapiths,'

the ' Orpheus and Eurydice,' show, in the opinion of the present writer, unmistakable evidence of Gouwi's collaboration. The large composition of ' Diana and Calisto,' and the popular ' Judgment of Paris,' show, if I am not mistaken, in great part the work of assistants — for instance, Cornelius de Vos. It would not surprise me if in the ' Judgment of Paris ' much was due even to De Crayer, for both he and De Vos, when treating the large nudes of the Rubens type, do so with less variety in contour, less flexibility and variety in surfaces than the master himself. I should consider the share of Rubens in the ' Diana and Calisto ' and the ' Judgment of Paris ' to be that of emphatic revision only, in trees, skies, accessory draperies; to be in fact the addition of these accessories rather than the execution of the more vital and significant portions of the work. The painter was at that time a constant victim to the gout, which would have affected him most in large pictures requiring continued effort; and the value of his revision and overseeing of these works is palpable when we are brought face to face with the unrevised pictures of his assistants, such as Gouwi's ' Fall of Icarus,' or the works of the frigid De Vos and the coarse Borrekens. Van Thulden, who is known to have assisted him greatly, seems in his own work, at Madrid and Vienna, uncertain,

if emphatic; inconstant in aspect and accomplishment.

We learn of Philip IV.'s impatience at the delays over the delivery of these works; the 'Flemish phlegm' of these men he contrasted with the rapidity of 'our own Velasquez.'

Rubens died leaving a portion of this task undone; one feels the haste, the lack of conviction and gusto in most of these pictures, whose ultimate purpose, the decoration of the Torre de la Parada, seems to have been somewhat casual in character. We can guess that Rubens had undertaken this enterprise without calculating upon its difficulties, and with his health no longer reliable as it had been in the past, though his gifts were unaffected. The death of the great painter was the signal for all the world to acquire his remaining canvases. Several that the painter had desired his family to retain, such as the 'Pelisse,' and the 'Three Graces,' were sold. We even know that Helen Fourment, in an explosive fit of prudery, contemplated the destruction of some of these works; his Catholic Majesty, Philip IV., became, however, the purchaser of the 'Three Graces,' and the 'Garden of Love,' which hung for some time in the alcove of his bedroom.

There is an epical quality in the work of Rubens which has estranged our generation, so devoted

to analysis. We often admire his painting less for its energy and the somewhat monotonous oneness of its effect, than for some element by the way; when missing these garnishings to the dish he has prepared we complain that it is too rich and too strong. There is a portion of his work — its pomp, its love of allegory — which was of his time, and which no longer affects us with the same pleasurable force. We do not recognise that it suited his temperament; that it has never been done by any one else quite as well; and that it furnished him with admirable chances for magnificent and resourceful painting. This reveals some of the virtue we find and admire in sonorous verse — that quality which a poet will sometimes put into a catalogue of names and places. His work in the mass may not impress us by the evidence of a searching and exquisite sense of beauty; but it does impress us by a volume and tonic quality no less rare, and by a sense of beauty which is more joyous than intimate, more profound and all-pervading than intense and haunting.

Rubens deals nobly and generously with the broad facts of life and history, its variety and movement; he has a classical frankness about facts, a classical frankness about physical suffering, which makes him a perfect interpreter of

Homeric fights or the physical details in the Metamorphoses of Ovid. His accessories are fine, well-wrought, and of price, as they are in much epical poetry: there is also a boldness and definiteness in the assertion of all other realities and values. His men and women are boldly drawn in character, in the essentials of their respective sex; he renders perfectly the force, beauty, and emphasis of animal life, the force and effectiveness of all powers and emotions. This statement gives him that large measure of praise we owe to him as an artist; and if he is below some other great men — though only in the expression of singular faculties of insight or in the possession of some unique temperamental gift — yet his greatest virtue lies in a large temperamental force no less unique. As a painter he has a range which is equalled only by Titian: if in temper, mood, and method he is more monotonous, he does not fall below the Venetian in his plastic sense and his powers of assertion.

I have been startled recently by a phrase quoted by a modern Oriental critic of art;[1] a current Japanese test of the beautiful, it seems. He asks, 'Is a work of art one before which one would care to die?' I think one would choose a

[1] Kakasu Okakura, author of 'The Ideals of the East,' a book remarkable for the breadth and subtlety of its views.

picture by some other painter than Rubens — if a picture is essential to dying. Before a work by Rubens it is, however, good to live. I fully recognise the essential nobility of the question posed by the exquisite Oriental, and the desirability of testing our admiration, at times, by more transcendental tests than those which we usually bring to bear on our facile and subservient code of convictions. So unusual a piece of transcendentalism has a tonic quality in our own time, when criticism concerns itself only with technique, colour, tone, and other accessory elements in art, or with the crude expression of cruder personalities: it would not have astonished a gathering of men at the time of the Renaissance.

I would not underrate the importance of technique, for it is on one or two technical matters that Rubens can challenge comparison with any artist of the past; that he reveals an expressive element, a searching and personal force, which is different in quality from those large effective generalities that form part of his subject-matter, and form the broad general emphasis of his personal temperament.

Critics have recognised that he is one of the world's supreme colourists; this is undoubtedly true. If we turn to Titian, the faculties of the Venetian in actual colour-invention seem largely

confined to a superb combining of intense browns, blues, and crimsons. The more varied and complicated colour schemes of Veronese are arrangements or combinations of beautiful colours, which might be imitated to some extent by coloured objects tactfully arranged: his is that marshalling of colour we might imagine possible in an ideal and perfectly lit tableau-vivant; we are astonished at his memory for beautiful colours. But with Rubens the colour sense is different. A sort of fervour or ecstasy of the artist in combining colours is characteristic of his use of them: he has not the storehouse of beautiful draperies that Veronese places against the pattern of his skies, nor has he even Veronese's variety of general aspect; but he has a far greater sensibility and intensity in the handling of the colours themselves, a greater sensibility to their immediate influence upon each other and to their value in retaining or repelling the light. The effect of Veronese's colour is more melodious, easier than Rubens' to perceive and to remember. The colour of Rubens is expressive in its very substance and actual mass; he deals with a greater number of colour melodies at once than does Veronese. The alternating influence upon each other of hot and cool tones is more constant in the practice of Rubens. Yet the present writer values above

Rubens' colour the colouring quality of his touch, its transparency or density, his constant preoccupation for the effect it will have upon the surface of his canvas — a preoccupation which we find in the noble art of Titian, but hardly at all in the solid, tranquil, and professional painting of Veronese.

The general effect of Rubens' colour is sometimes too rich; but then it is so intentionally, and it is we who are at fault — we expect a peach to taste like a cherry.

The dominating effect of Rubens' colour is emphatic and sonorous; it is rich in suggestion of force and possession, rich in red and the colours of maturity.

Rubens' progress in the world of art was a sort of triumphal march; and his colour has a triumphant and emphatic quality. It is often magnificent; at times enchanting, as in his portraits of Helen Fourment; at times tragic and bitter, as in the 'St. Francis interceding with Christ' at Brussels, and the 'Fury of Progne' at Madrid. Rubens as a colourist reveals emotional force and passionate quality, while Veronese remains placid or enchanting.

I have admitted that, to me at least, Rubens' expressive handling of his oil medium and paints counts enormously in the effect of his colour;

ranks above it even, for the handling of the surfaces in his pictures would still convey a sense of colour were the colouring matter to evaporate and leave the canvases monochrome. This will seem paradoxical to some, to others it is merely the statement of a commonplace.

The greatest technical force in the art of Rubens — the one in which his achievement is most rare and most difficult to match elsewhere — is of a different character, and one which is not usually in the first place credited to him: this quality is his drawing. Rubens is one of the world's two supreme draughtsmen, one of the men who never forget the continuous quality of form as it exists round and over the human body. He does not content himself with the contour alone, viewing a figure as a silhouette: nor is his drawing merely accurate (that is, conventional in proportion and detail); his sense of form is all-pervading and continuous. No one else, excepting Michael Angelo, has this quality in so marked a degree; no artist is more conscious of the bulk, the actual density and elasticity of form. This supreme plastic sense is further strengthened by an extraordinary memory for detail, and an extraordinary knowledge of the effect of perspective upon detail and upon mass.

I would not suggest that Rubens' drawing is

accurate or always beautiful; it is so very much more vital and significant than are those rhythmic conventionalities which these words usually imply. His plastic sense is immense; his power of conveying his knowledge without a loss of vitality is immense. An old-fashioned school of criticism would praise his anatomical knowledge to account for his constant resource; but I am not sure that anatomical knowledge, accuracy, or truth has much to do with it; — the faculties of measurement and analysis these qualities would imply are different from Rubens' powers of emphasis and synthesis. I have heard the corpulence of his torsos and the curve of the legs criticised; but these characteristics belong to the type he prefers; they do not exclude a marvellous sense of form, which we find revealed in the sinuosities or variations of the contours and surfaces. Great exaggerations, great departures from usual fact, will not exclude this sense of balance in variation, which the sense of form searches out as much as it notes the beautiful character of detail. Not only shall we find that Rubens possesses each fact as well as do others, but his manner of approach counts for more. He possesses these facts without loss to the whole; he never forgets the value of mass in the variations of its contour and surface. He has shown himself less fascinated by some

forms of detail than others, less susceptible to some facts of construction; but we cannot escape from the conclusion that under an apparent ease and laxity of form he conceals a boundless knowledge and memory. We have but to look at his 'Fall of the Damned' to be lost in astonishment at his knowledge of the unexpected, the unusual, and the effect of motion upon form: his memory for the variations upon the different portions of the human anatomy. His figures are not abstractions of facts, visualised separately, and connected by a conventional code of proportion; he draws figures as flexible solids seen in space, and influenced in their shape by the laws of balance and the actual facts of their substance, their faculty of bending or resistance. As a draughtsman he stands with Michael Angelo; their knowledge and their memory are greater than those of any other artist; they can rely upon their plastic sense, when another man would measure and collect facts. Each is, as a draughtsman, at once constructive and creative.

I have described Rubens as one of the greatest students in art the world has yet seen. He astonishes us as much by his natural gifts as by his powers of assimilation; like Raphael and Velasquez, he added by study many inches to his natural stature as an artist.

CHAPTER XI

VAN DYCK

If in the case of Rubens any attempt at definition has to take into account his astonishing native force and enthusiasm, any attempt to define Van Dyck must take into account his felicity of temperament and his instinctive ease: this should palliate some criticism, both of the quality of his work and of the original force behind it, which I am about to make.

Give us the man who has invented a formula of art, who has been universal in his scope, tumultuous yet delightful also, — and we have Rubens. In literature — with a difference in cast of mind and in the quality of the copiousness, ease, and variety of his work — we have Shakespeare. Take a man with a keen sense for the effective force of this new art, its effectiveness and variety; and we have Webster, who has none of the originality of his model, but a wonderful instinct for the effectiveness of his manner.

But to compare Van Dyck's relation to Rubens

with Webster's to Shakespeare would be unjust to Van Dyck, who had a far greater personality than Webster, and was of far greater value in the quality of his output and its significance to the world: Van Dyck's facility is not his sole recommendation. His personal gifts are considerable, his technical facility as a painter in many ways unsurpassed: it is in the fibre of the man himself that we detect a certain weakness.

If the power to do perfectly all that an artist sets about to do is the essential of success in art, then we are unjust to Van Dyck. If we expect something more than good luck, — a perfect good luck in his case, — then Van Dyck is to seek.

Some of his masterpieces are inimitable, and his average is magnificent. Yet his paintings often hold us less than those of inferior and less accomplished men. There is something lacking in the man; we admire his work, but we do not love it; — or shall we say there is too much in it to which one remains indifferent? His art, as it is revealed in drawing, colour, and painting, is too fine for everyday use; he is brilliant (I had almost said superficial, but this would be unjust). Perhaps he is lacking in intimacy and simplicity; yet this need not have been a reproach.

If we moderns fail to understand him always, it is because his own time understood him perhaps

too readily, and some of his charm has faded, — like a fashion, or a practice in manners, which is no longer ours. In view of his artistic success, his facility and felicity, it is perhaps we who are to seek.

Three of Van Dyck's pictures in the Prado concern us immediately; they show him in his closest relation to Rubens, and display an instinctive ease and force, a sense for the effective, which made me use the perhaps loose-jointed analogy of Shakespeare and Webster. These three canvases are the 'Crown of Thorns,' the 'Betrayal of Christ,' and the 'Brazen Serpent.' Each of these works is a masterpiece of painting; and in the case of the second, the 'Betrayal of Christ,' we are face to face with the evidence of unusual qualities, not often equalled by Rubens himself, and never achieved again by Van Dyck. Here the sense of the effective in the designing of pictures (which at times is all that we are willing to allow Van Dyck) is of a different order; and we are brought face to face with a dramatic picture which leaves far behind the somewhat theatrical and pathetic rendering of sacred subjects usually affected by this painter.

The scene develops itself beneath a tree upon a slight eminence on which Christ stands motionless. He is deeply moved by an inward sorrow which



VAN DYCK. — THE BETRAYAL OF CHRIST

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the half-closed lips would still withhold, if the swelling of the temples and the ridge upon the brows did not hint at the presence of a profound emotion. The absence of an obvious or sentimental resignation, the noble carriage of the head and throat, point to one of those lucky chances which may befall a painter once only in his lifetime, and which we are far from finding in the central figure in the 'Crown of Thorns,' which hangs near. To the virile and passive figure of Christ in the 'Betrayal on the Mount of Olives,' the artist has contrasted the large, strong, and animal type of Judas — no snivelling traitor on the outer edge of comedy, at once miser and buffoon, but a nobler kind of ruffian, virile as his master; in ordinary life a large, bluff, damnably honest fellow, 'who knew the Master well.' Round the central group surges, laughs, scowls, and exults a magnificently designed rabble. Some of the fury of this crowd is contained in an exquisite and powerful preliminary sketch for the picture, in the possession of Sir Francis Cook at Richmond: a more sober but very noble replica of the work at Madrid is in the possession of Lord Methuen. It is marked by some of the force and majesty of the canvas in the Prado; though only the masterpiece itself contains that unique combination of qualities which gives it rank among

the most splendid and dramatic pictures in the world.

The ' Betrayal of Christ,' the ' Crown of Thorns ' (both at the Prado), and the portrait of Isabella Brant, now at St. Petersburg, formed part of the superb gift of pictures which Van Dyck gave to his master before going to Italy; and they remained in Rubens' possession till his death. Such a gift makes one wonder if life in those days did not share with the art it enriched in a certain largeness and nobility, which is different from the haughty shyness which marks our modern manners and use of life. One feels before some of the masterpieces in the Prado — the ' Bacchanal ' of Titian, the ' Lances ' of Velasquez, the ' Three Graces ' of Rubens, and the ' Betrayal of Christ ' — that, in spite of our vaunted sincerity, our modern intellectual and emotional manifestations in art are shy and indefinite beside the marvellous assertions of personal thought, emotion, reverie, or observation (as the case may be) which these works reveal to us with all the force of discovery and all the powers of persuasion. It is one of the virtues of masterpieces that they make us actually and metaphorically rub our eyes and look up.

The ' Crown of Thorns ' is not a work of the same rank as the ' Betrayal '; yet it is so splendid



VAN DYCK. — THE CROWN OF THORNS

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and so lucky in its ease and technical success, that we forget to be critical: of this work there exists a superb early version at Berlin. The 'Plague of Serpents' signed by Rubens is, like the 'Theodosius repulsed by St. Ambrose' in the National Gallery, and the 'St. Martin' at Windsor, a superb and free interpretation of a subject by Rubens; though I personally feel inclined to go further and give the picture entirely to Van Dyck — so transformed and saturated is it by the personality of the latter, which we find shown by his mannerisms in the formation of the cheek-bones, the hands, and the very folds of the draperies. The work falls into a noble arrangement of deep olive green, dull gold, and grape-purple, against a luminous sky, in which recur large spaces of a pale and liquid blue.

I have already said that it is difficult to explain why we mention Van Dyck's superb portraits with less praise than their obvious qualities would seem to command. Van Dyck has created for us the aspect and personality of Charles I.; he can see a face and underline the character behind it and endow the presentment with an astonishing vitality; if we weigh the qualities we like best in the treatment of portraits we shall be sure to find some example in his work that contains these very qualities. Morelli, the great Italian critic,

has spoken of the 'elegant formality of Van Dyck'; and I think this element of ceremony in his work deprives it of our ready sympathy, or rather creates a sense of fastidious monotony. I do not know if I am here merely advocating the artist who paints in his shirt-sleeves, or if, in the words of the old fable, I advocate 'Marsyas, who is hairy and ugly, self-taught, and the father of a large family,' against Apollo, 'whose very locks and lyre are bright with gems.' This is not my intention, but there are times when one wonders whether Van Dyck's sitters were always so beautifully posed before the world, or posed upon so fine a pattern of deportment. I venture this timidly and with a sense of shame, for Midas and Marsyas will be with me; and before certain portraits of Van Dyck one forgets the portraits of any other painter, they are so radiant and so splendid.

The portrait of Lanière, the lute-player, is given a central place at the Prado. It is a work which, like many a portrait by Van Dyck, stands beyond all usual criticism. It is a curious fact that Van Dyck is at his best as a painter of men. I would add that he is better at rendering the nervous force which belongs to men of a studious habit and a refined cast of mind than at painting the brio and dash and ease of a Spinola or a Duke

de Croy; and that Van Dyck, the most feminine of the great masters, is below himself as a painter of women. The portrait of the lute-player is free from accessories 'de parade' — columns and curtains, etc. Van Dyck has concentrated his attention on the face and hands, which enliven the picture with its black upon dark crossed by the large diagonal of the magnificent lute held by the musician.

The portrait of the 'Marquesa de Leganés' is too dainty and too soft: the pearl or grape-like bloom we admire in the 'Duchess of Croy' at Munich is here exaggerated to the point of weakness, — the bloom on the grey whites, the bloom on the blacks, the pearly bloom upon the flesh, convey a sense of unreality: she seems a woman of silk and gossamer, thinking silken thoughts.

We find Van Dyck in his more florid and demonstrative vein in the fine portrait of the 'Count de Berg,' and in the more suave and showy portrait in an oval picture of 'Van Dyck and Endymion Porter,' — the admirable and much hated Endymion Porter, who here looks bluff and solid enough to have been more popular as a man. The artist by his side is less convincingly a likeness. It is a curious fact that though many portraits by painters of themselves rank among their finest works, Van Dyck has not left

us one engaging or convincing portrait of himself.

Van Dyck's portraits and pictures are not all grouped together in the Prado. Conditions of size, etc., have prevented their being placed with the same regard for their presentation which has now fallen to the lot of Velasquez and Titian in the gallery at Madrid; one work has, however, been placed in the small room given over to small and carefully chosen works by the great masters,—a sort of small epitome of the contents of the Prado. This is a practice for which I have to confess to a sort of weakness, whilst appreciating the more just and instructive fashion of grouping schools and the works of one man together. Yet it is instructive, delightful, and stimulating to see the masters brought into congress, as it were; and one remembers with affection such old-fashioned and friendly places as the Salon Carré in the Louvre, and the Tribuna of the Uffizi. In the equivalent for this at the Prado, the direction has placed Van Dyck's portrait of the 'Countess of Oxford' where it hangs as the companion work to Rubens' portrait of Marie de Medicis. This portrait is very popular: it shares that rather unaccountable celebrity with the portrait of 'Wharton as a Shepherd' at St. Petersburg as one of the really first-rate Van Dycks one must



VAN DYCK. — THE COUNTESS OF OXFORD

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travel to see. The 'Countess of Oxford' is a fine picture, exquisitely painted; like the pretty 'Shepherd at the Hermitage,' it is a good Van Dyck, but not a first-rate one. A great freedom and spontaneity is characteristic of the workmanship, which, with the colour also, is so fresh that it gives the illusion of pigment that is still wet, which to-morrow must sink into that substance we find in other pictures. Dated 1637, this portrait shows that renewed study of Titian which we find so constantly in the work of Van Dyck. The pigment is of a different consistency to Titian's, the diluent employed would seem to be different, and the outward effect is more obviously sparkling and luminous; yet we find the reddish contours, the vinous strain in the quality of the colour, the shell and petal-like edge to the touch, the delicate science of Titian — but in hands that were incapable of the sacrifice, the moderation and control of this greatest of Venetians, the father of painting.

The 'Countess of Oxford' is more engaging than beautiful, more animated than either. As a work of art the picture falls immeasurably below the 'Duchess of Croy,' or the dainty and affected 'Beatrix de Cusance, Princesse de Cantecroix,' — that *chère précieuse* on whom Van Dyck has spent his most exquisite and delicate skill in the

portrait which hangs at Windsor; nor has it the pictorial charm of the Liechtenstein portrait of Maria Louisa de Tassis.

The estimate of Jordaens as an artist has still to be made. The solid qualities he possessed as a painter and draughtsman seem to have fallen out of favour; another generation may, in reaction from the existing state of affairs, value him too highly, and forget that to him fell a portion only of Rubens' inheritance; he had none of his master's sense of movement, none of his wit in handling the brush, but a large measure of his plastic sense. This artist has a rather ponderous and emphatic habit of thought; at his best he is worthy of the greatest admiration, at his worst (and he is very unequal) he is still instructive and stimulating to the artist and art-lover. There are few of his pictures that do not contain some large and noble piece of naturalism. His pictures at Brussels, Munich, Paris, and Dresden contain masterpieces of drawing and painting. His work at Madrid is magnificent in its average, and notable for one masterpiece — the family portrait group, numbered 1410, in which we find Jordaens comparable with Rubens, though a more solid and heavy painter. The 'Meleager and Atalanta' is heavy and Flemish in type, but radiant in colour and quality of pigment; this work, together

with the mystic 'Marriage of St. Catherine,' shows that phase of his talent in which his work resembles the early paintings of Van Dyck: the last picture is so singularly like Van Dyck's work that one hesitates in accepting the attribution to Jordaens in the catalogue of the Prado.

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